MONA'S ISLE



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MONA'S ISLE.

MONA'S ISLE,

AND OTHER POEMS.

BY WILLIAM KENNISH, R.N.

AUTHOR OF "A METHOD FOR CONCENTRATING THE FIRE OF A BROADSIDE OF A SHIP OF WAR," ETC. ETC.

"Alas! I'm but a nameless wight,
Trod i' th' mire clean out o' sight."—BURNS.

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PREFACE.

THE kind indulgence of the Public is humbly solicited by the Author of the following Poems,—if indeed the rude productions of his unlettered Muse may be styled as such. He is a native of the Isle of Man (alluded to in the Poems as "Mona's Isle"), where he passed his early years as a ploughboy, and in other simple rustic occupations. At the age of twenty-two years he entered the British Navy as a common seaman, and learned of his messmates to converse in English, being scarcely able to express himself intelligibly except in his native language, the Manx. He likewise, under the same tuition, learned to read and write tolerably, and made considerable progress in arithmetic, sufficient, altogether, to enable him to undertake the duties of a Warrant-Officer, in which capacity he served for seventeen years. On entering upon the duties of the latter station, he was permitted to mingle with the young gentlemen of the Navy, many of whom being well educated in the various branches of literature and science kindly volunteered

to become his instructors, and to them he is indebted for whatever literary acquirements he possesses, they being ever as willing to impart instruction as he was to receive it. Such was his course of education, beginning at the age of twenty-two years to learn the first rudiments of scholarship, and the English language, which he trusts may, in some measure, serve as an excuse for the errors of his composition.

On his return to England from his first station as a Warrant-Officer, he published a Work entitled, "A Method for Concentrating the Fire of a Broadside of a Ship of War," for which Invention he had previously received the Gold Isis Medal of the Society of Arts and Commerce. With the exception of the above honorary reward, little encouragement was given the Author to prosecute his inquiries in the mystic field of invention, and he was compelled to abandon the pursuit, but unfortunately not before he had sacrificed a considerable part of his very limited means. To wile away the tedium occasioned by the abandonment of his scientific pursuits, he employed himself in composing some rude verses on the peaceful and happy scenes of his earlier years, having never before attempted any composition in the shape of poetry. He never intended to bring these incipient efforts before the public, but having submitted the Manuscript for the perusal of friends residing in the Isle of Man, they not only approved of the spirit of the Poems, but strongly advised the Author to

publish them. How far he may have been prudent in so doing, must be decided by the public. His training, under the severe discipline of blighted hope, prepares him for the negative; but should Fate decree it otherwise, and if the uncultivated channel through which he has endeavoured to convey the feelings of the heart finds its way to the sympathy of his fellow-creatures, his labours will not have been entirely in vain.

He joyfully embraces this opportunity of rendering his most grateful acknowledgments to all those of his friends and patrons who have subscribed to his humble efforts, and respectfully submits the volume to the kind consideration of the Public.

ADDRESS TO THE MANX.

My brothers all—each honest Manx—
You'll have your humble servant's thanks,
In merry chimes,
If you a helping hand would lend,
And with a right good will befriend
His rustic rhymes;

And you, my Mona's blooming fair,
Whose gentle traits and beauty rare
Adorn your Isle,
If fate prolongs his chequer'd days
Will have the softest lay of praise
He can compile.

The Genius of my Island stood
Before me on the briny flood,
In ancient vest,
And pointing with her mystic wan
Towards her long-neglected land
She me address'd;—

"My son, I've sought thee far and near,
Throughout the vast terrestrial sphere,
Since you, to roam
Through distant regions of the earth,
Left the fair Island of your birth,
And peaceful home.

The Muse had mark'd thee long ere now,
(E'en when you held your father's plough,)
At my request,
To strike my simple rural lyre,
And fan the patriotic fire
In thy young breast."

Here she drew forth to light a scroll,
And said—"I here thy name enrol
With those of yore
Who sung of Mona's fertile vales,
Her mountains, rivers, hills and dales,
And wave-lash'd shore:

Then go and strike the tuneful string,
And of thy Mona's customs sing
In homely style;
Let not obscurity of name
Retard thy course to raise to fame
Thy native isle."

Thus her kind dictates I've obey'd
As far as in my power laid,
And now I sue

Protection, in her mystic name,
To keep alive the magic flame,
Manxmen, from you!

And should a stimulating glow
Within your gen'rous bosoms flow
Towards your bard,
How deeply would *his* bosom feel,
And he with renovated zeal
Would labour hard,

Whilst he can wield "a gray-goose quill,"
With willing hand, though scant in skill,
And ne'er will pause
To strike, with exstacy of heart,
The highest note verse can impart
In Mona's cause!

Now to conclude this short address,
I wish, dear Manxmen, to express
(And make a finish)
That I am truly and sincere,
Throughout life's fair or rough career,
Your bard, WILL KENNISH.

MONA'S ISLE.

CANTO I.

SWEET rural Isle! may I, thy rustic son,
Sing of the charms that through thy customs run,
While pictured memories my soul inspire
My youthful scenes at forty to admire.
Tho' doom'd by fate these twenty years to roam
Through many climes, from thee my native home,
Yet still fond memory, by its pleasing art,
Paints all the scenes of childhood on my heart;
And now since I have travell'd far and wide,
My thoughts and home I cannot yet divide;
There's not a spot on earth that I can find
Like thee, my Mona, suited to my mind.

Then let me now from Israel's holy coast,*
Of which the sages never cease to boast,
Direct my thoughts to thee, my native isle,
And shut my eyes on all but thee the while.
There's nothing here but savage warlike strife;
Man only lives to take his brother's life,

* Marmorice Bay, in the province of Keramania, in Asia Minor, distant 463 miles N.W. of Jerusalem.—1840-41.

To satisfy the tyrants of his race,
Whose thirst for blood would all the world deface.

Now will my fancy take its airy flight
To view my scenes of childhood with delight,
And form my rustic verses, thus untaught
By school or art, for such I never sought:—
And, sweet Simplicity! be thou my guide,
While Nature all that's wanting shall provide
To 'wake the lyre and touch each trembling string,
For unto Nature's sons I try to sing.

Hail, Mona's sons! I come with humble lay
To strike my harp, your customs to pourtray
To such as now would deign to read the page
In this refined and artificial age:
Tho' what avail their boasted schools of art
That only teach the head and not the heart?
To me more sweet one stroke of Nature's pen
Than all the labour'd skill of college-men.

My dear loved isle, that gave my being birth,
Thou art to me the sweetest spot on earth,
Thou who my cares in innocence beguiled,
Though far from thee, I'm still thy simple child.

Ere yet the summer clothes thy fields in bloom,
Or ere thy heather sheds its rich perfume,
The early primrose hastens to appear
From 'neath the snow to lead the vernal year,

Nurtured by Nature in thy rocky soil,
It buds and blooms without man's care or toil.
Sweet flower! how oft, when but a wayward boy,
I've found thee first, and pluck'd thee up with joy,
Running in haste unto my mother kind,
(Whose smiles bespoke the feelings of her mind,)
She'd say, "My son, the spring is coming fast
To shield us from the winter's piercing blast;
May He, my child, who rules the universe,
Prepare our hearts His mercies to rehearse;
For He is bountiful and kind to all
His creatures here below, both great and small;
Making his covenant with Noah sure,
That seed and harvest-time should still endure
While earth remains, to measure day and night,
To show His goodness, mercy and His might:
And e'en this flower, which thou hast found to-day,
His goodness and His mercy doth display.
It gives thee pleasure, child,—so it doth me
This simple harbinger of spring to see,
For here it seems it has fulfill'd the end
Of Wisdom's plan, that first the flower did send.
Give me the ancient jug of chinaware,
That I may place the virgin flower there,
That while it blooms it may our hearts incline
To own the kindness of the hand divine;
He clothes the fields with verdure and with corn,
Proclaiming that another spring is born
With sunny aspect from the womb of time,
To chase the gloom of winter from our clime.

Sweet simple vale! how oft at eve's soft close,
When night to man and beast gives sweet repose,
I've seen thy happy family gather round
The good old man, with reverence profound,
To hear his wisdom and his pious lore,
While bending 'neath the pressure of fourscore:
Leaning upon his staff he thus would say,
"Let's worship God:" and then kneel down to pray.
So far advanced in number'd years was he,
His eyes were dim, the book he could not see;
But his loved daughter, ever prompt and kind
To study all the feelings of his mind,
Perform'd the pious duty—oft in tears
For poor grandfather in his helpless years:
Next her good man, his only son and heir,
Became the subject of her humble prayer,
And all her children dear she would implore
The Lord to spare, His mercies to adore,
And shield them from the evils of this life;—
Thus pray'd the daughter, mother, and the wife.

Now spring is past, and idle lies the plough,
I'll turn my thoughts towards the mountain's brow,
Where many a group of peasants at the dawn
Are seen to move along the upland lawn,
Towards the north of Corna-Chesgia's side,
Their winter's stock of fuel to provide
With lab'ring hand from Nature's ample store
Of turfy mould beneath the grassy moor.

This yearly pic-nic, mix'd with useful toil,
Calls forth the dame the three-legg'd pot to boil
Of good hung beef that graced the chimney-cheek
The winter through amongst the turfy reek;
And cowry,* juice of oatmeal's husky seed,
That in this mountain banquet takes the lead:
The oaten bannock, staff of Mona's food,
She next prepares in segments thick and good;
Of new laid eggs are pack'd full many a score,
And good fresh butter churn'd the day before.
With joyful glee each lusty neighb'ring swain
Comes flocking round to join the mountain-train;
The females too are summon'd to attend
This festive day, their pleasing aid to lend;
For whilst the men the best of turf select
The women do their duty not neglect,
But cheerfully each Manx young buxom lass
Displays the crocks and platters on the grass.
When now prepared the homely welcome fare,
They sit them down the well-spread feast to share,
And while each rustic plays an eager part,
The Sire repeats "There's plenty in the cart
To satisfy us all I'm sure this day,
So lads eat on, and spare it not I pray."
Each bashful maid, so modest and reserved,
Takes care her own intended best is served;
While many looks of artless love pass round,
Pure joyful mirth and innocence abound;

* The Manx name for a jelly made from the seeds sifted from oatmeal.

The staid in years no longer can refrain
From joining chorus with the youthful train,
Calling to mind those happy days gone by,
Ere cares of life drew forth the heartfelt sigh.

When dinner o'er, and th' accustom'd grace,
Each at his labour now retakes his place,
Whilst I, the youngest of the hardy band,
Was task'd the turf to spread with aching hand,
Marking each moment, as they slowly pass'd,
Wishing each barrow-load to be the last,
Until the sun sunk far into the west
Behind the summit of vast Snaafield's* crest,
Throwing its shadow o'er the lowland plain,
The well-known gnomon† of the lab'ring swain.
When past this day of useful toil and mirth,
Where many assignations had their birth,
They homeward wend their course along the moor,
Their wives and children wait them at the door,
And many a neighb'ring cottage-lass was there,
To meet the swain the courting-kiss to share.
As careless they to hide their artless love
As the woodpigeons billing in the grove,
For there no etiquette or worldly pride
Had taught the heart to stray from virtue's side.
Their harmless love the matron would survey,
And the pure dictates of her mind display

* The highest mountain in the island.

† The shadow of this mountain is the true time-keeper of the inhabitants of the mountainous parts of the Island.

In giving counsel to each youthful pair,
Ending the subject in her evening pray'r,
Imploring of the Lord that they might stand
As polish'd pillars from the Maker's hand
Round Zion's gates, where He delights to dwell,
And of His mercies to their offspring tell.

How sweet my pleasing dreams, in life's young morn,
When peace and plenty did my cot adorn,
And summer clothed the meadows in their pride
With all the hues that Nature doth provide:
E'en now, methinks, I feel the balmy gale
That winnow'd softly through my native vale,
With gentle zephyrs o'er my youthful brow,
When spring call'd forth my efforts at the plough;
Or as a herd-boy with my crooked horn
When cows were wont to trespass on the corn;
Or when the geese I drove towards the plain
To pick the grass when scanty was the grain;
Or when I sat beneath the hawthorn's shade,
While flush'd with life appear'd the rural glade,
To view the Sabbath-morning's blissful scene,
When earth and sky seem'd equally serene;
The soaring lark, the corn-crake,* or the quail,
First the mild blush of bashful morn to hail;
The dove, the cuckoo in the neighb'ring trees,
The thrush, the linnet, and the humming bees,

* The quail is called by this name in the Island.

Join'd in sweet concert to their Maker's praise,
In nature's temple 'neath the morning rays:
The tired horse would to the fields resort
To feed, and roll upon the grass in sport,
With thankful instinct that no draught or load
Would on this day his back or shoulders goad;
The tame domestic cows, with udders full,
Welcom'd the maid, while roar'd the Lammas-bull;
The fleecy sheep, feeding in flocks together
Upon the heights, among the blooming heather,
While solemnly re-echo'd through the dell
The distant murmurs of Kirk-Maughold's bell,
Would warn me homeward to my cleanly cot
To get my crowdie reeking from the pot.

What rows of pewter-platters, bright and clean,
Upon the Sabbath-day, all shelved were seen?
Whilst over all was placed, with cautious care,
The heirloom ancient-figured earthenware,
That had from sire to son withstood the shock
Of time and chance and many a careless knock;
The wooden trenchers, scoured well with sand
The eve before, in ready order stand
Upon the bink;*—for careful still the wife
To save the edge of the old carving-knife
From being damaged by the glossy clay
That graced her table on this festive day.—
When breakfast done and cleanly swept the floor,
The spades and mattocks placed behind the door,

* The Manx name for a stone slab.

And nicely trimm'd with turf the kitchen-fire,
The family to the oaken press retire
To change their garments for the Sabbath-day,
And mother's handy work with pride display.
To make their shirts she spun the fibred flax,
And e'en the coats they wore upon their backs
Pass'd through her hands in many a twisty thread,
While at her wheel, regardless of her bed.
Each shirt and hose were placed with matron care
Upon the horse around the fire to air,
While she herself appear'd so clean and prim
In her mob-cap of double-border'd rim,
In graceful folds made up by starch and quill
In small round loops by Peggy's home-taught skill,
Its strings were made of muslin fine and thin,
To form a bow beneath her dimpled chin.
Her quilted silk, of many a diamond shape,
And her short body-dress, with scollop'd cape,
She would in homely-modesty display,
She wore the same upon her wedding-day:—
It graced her mother too I've heard her say.—
The elder branches now in *laughtan*-hose,*
And all the rest of their best Sunday-clothes,
Pass'd o'er the bridge towards the house of pray'r,
While mother stopp'd the dinner to prepare,
And read her Bible to her youngest son,
When all her work of cookery was done.
I think I see her now, with pious air,
Sit down in the old oaken elbow'd-chair,

* Made from wool of the natural colour of a sheep peculiar to the island.

With spectacles and Testament in hand,
And solemnly my silence would command,
While she selected from the sacred page
The words best suited to my tender age;
Perhaps 'twas righteous Joseph's pleasing tale,
How he did o'er the ills of life prevail,
By strict adherence to the cause of truth
Taught him by holy Jacob in his youth;
Thus cautiously, with kind maternal care,
She would my heart for happiness prepare,
For well she knew the nature of mankind,
That what is stamp'd upon the youthful mind
Is the sure fountain, when temptations press,
That flows to happiness, or deep distress.

Such are thy customs, Mona, ever fair!
How blest are they who in those customs share,
And to thy simple manners still conform,
While I am toss'd on life's tempestuous storm.

MONA'S ISLE.

CANTO II.

Could I, like Milton, heaven's high theme rehearse,
Soaring on transcendental wing on high,
Or glide, like Goldsmith, down the stream of verse,
Or with a Thomson in the Seasons vie,

I'd string my lyre to its highest note,
I'd seek the Muses' aid and sunny smile,
And heart and soul in unison devote
To sing the praises of my dear loved Isle.

Yet though not taught, like those I've named above,
In the learn'd mysteries of schools or art,
I have that portion of my country's love
That prompts me on to try a poet's part—

To sing my long neglected Island's fame—
To bring the customs of her sons to light,
Customs time-honored! mingling with thy name,
Dear Mona!—ever precious in my sight!—
Freedom's thy birthright too—and truth and
honour bright!

Awake, my Muse!—together let us sing
Of hills and groves and sweet sequester'd vales—
Of feather'd tribes that make the valleys ring—
And of the gurgling brook that never fails,

But murmurs hoarsely from the depths below,
Swelling in floods within the darken'd dell,
Deep'ning its course for ever in its flow
Thro' craggy glens where wizards love to dwell—

Of rugged mountains, clad in mossy vest,
Towering on high their dark gigantic forms,
With far outspreading base and taper'd crest
That's stood the rage of countless winters' storms—

Of North Barrule, nodding o'er Maughold's plains,
Paying due homage to vast Snaafield's height,
While Pennypot o'er Lonan still maintains
Its evening shadows with undoubted right—

Of Barrule Rushen which the south commands,
And kindly shelters from the western blast
The lowland cultured fields and rocky strands,
When stormy clouds the wintry skies o'ercast.

But, North Barrule, I first would sing of thee,
For I was nurtured on thy shelving side;
Full well I yet remember when, with glee,
I on my pony to thy top would ride

To fetch the well-dried turf for winter's fire
Pack'd as a load upon its shaggy back
In straw-made creels, while my grey-headed sire
Watch'd my return to place them on the stack.

But awful thou, when thy nocturnal ghost
Lifted its deep sepulchral voice on high,
Alarming all the peaceful neighb'ring coast
As it came wafted through the vaulted sky.

Full many a tale was told in days of yore
Of this alarming phantom of the night,
'Twas said to be a man besmear'd in gore,
With countenance terrific to the sight.

The story went, that once in olden time
A murder was committed on the moor,
And that the man supposed t' have done the crime
Vanish'd from earth and ne'er was heard of more.

But, strange to say, ere he his exit made,
His ghost was banish'd to the *gob na scute*,*
There to remain, and never to be laid
By magic art from its dark ghostly nook,

Though Ballayockey and old Ballawhane†
Tried their united art for many an age

* A provincial name given to the N.E. promontory of North Barrule.

† The names of two farms, situate in the north of the island, whose owners were supposed to have in their possession a book containing instructions how to lay ghosts, and cure all manner of diseases inflicted by witches and fairies.

To put to flight old *gob na scute's bogane,**
But he was proof from their witch-searching
page;

When, lo! an honest bold Manx mountaineer—
Well fired with the fierce blood of barleycorn
At Ramsey Fair, that comes but once a year,
And press'd by friends had swigg'd an extra
horn,—

Seized his stout cudgel in his hardy fist,
And laid a shilling, and a quart to boot,
That he that night the demon would resist,
And put to flight the old *bogane, gob scute.*

The night was dark, and dismal was the sky
When he stalk'd o'er that unfrequented road,
Though not a rock or hedge could he descry,
By chance he found the goblin's dire abode.

As he each rock with cautious steps did tread,
Expecting something awful then to hear,
He heard a noise that fill'd his soul with dread,
And made his hair stand stiff on end with fear;

But when recover'd from this reverie,
He seized his cudgel in his fist once more,
And look'd around, but nothing could he see,
While the gruff noise continued still to roar;

* The Manx name for goblin.

Yet the undaunted Manxman stopp'd not here,
But shaped his course towards the very spot,
For now his courage overcame the fear
That o'er his brain the upper hand had got.

Thus fired by zeal and Ramsey's good brown ale,
He pass'd the heath with ardent steps, though slow,
Regardless of the keen north-eastern gale
That on that night most bitterly did blow:

As nearer he approach'd the fearful cave,
The more courageous he appear'd to be
To face the demon, and its rage to brave,
For what it was he had resolved to see;

He lists,—and hears a doleful hollow noise,
As if it issued through a chasm below
In the deep cavern, but no human voice,
Though something like an indistinct "hallo!"

Striving his scatter'd senses to compose,
He plunged within the subterraneous vault,
And resolutely to the bottom goes,
Determined that it should not be his fault

If he that night did not find out the cause
Of such a nuisance to the country-side,
Though oft he was obliged to stop and pause
Amongst the cracks that did the rocks divide.

At last he comes unto the very brink
Of this long-dreaded goblin-haunted hole,
And heard it bellow through each awful chink,
Enough to terrify the bravest soul:

He takes the cudgel now in both his hands,
Calling aloud unto the roaring fiend,
Commanding silence; he its name demands,
Telling it boldly, "I am Jem Kermeend,

The son of Jemmy-Jem, Jem-beg-Jem-moar,*
Who have for ages back brought up their sons
As honest heirs of *Lerghy ird Ballure*;†—
And I can tell you, as the story runs,

They fought with pitch-forks and with scythes in hand,
Led on by their good neighbour, braveKerrade,
Taking in the besieged front their stand
When Cromwell's army did our Isle invade:—

Then thinkest thou that thy unmeaning roar
Can scare a man of such heroic race?
Who, or what art thou? as I ask'd before;
Come forth at once, and show thy ghastly face,

* The ancient custom of the Manx was to call the children after the Christian name of the father, and not the surname; and here my hero was the son of Jemmy, the son of Jem, the son of little-Jem, the son of big-Jem; *beg* is the Manx for little, and *moar* for big, loading him with the names of his ancestors for four generations, as is frequently the case, and to make it still more ridiculous, they frequently add the name of the farm.

† The name of a farm.

Which thou put'st on to frighten Alice Moare,*
Poor helpless body! in her lonely cot,
Poking thy uncouth horns within her door
As if thou wert a reckless mountain-stot."†

No longer then could he contain his rage,
But rush'd with fury on towards his foe,
Determined the grim goblin to engage,
And bring him to the ground at the first blow.

As he advanced the mountain sprite to meet,
With upraised cudgel fearlessly and brave,
A rock gave way from underneath his feet,
And down he tumbled in another cave

Elliptically formed of solid rock,
Never explored by mortal man before;
But when my hero overcame this shock,
He found the great *bogane* had ceased to roar.

He kept his breath,—listening with eager ear,
But nothing could he either hear or see;
Again his courage almost turn'd to fear,
Muttering to himself "what can it be?"

In this dilemma he began to think
That the great stone that tumbled from its seat

* An old woman who lived in a lonely cottage on the moor, and when the cattle sought shelter within her porch at night, she would believe it a visit paid her by the *bogane gob scute.*

† The Manx for a young bullock.

Had found its way into the awful chink,
And made the demon from its hole retreat.

In this conjecture he was right at last,
For now he hears a low and murm'ring tone,
Caused by the fury of the stormy blast
Rushing around the edges of the stone

That chanced to fall into the very crack
Where Borealus blew its ghostly sound,
Scaring Kirk-Maughold's folks, for ages back,
From this its trumpet underneath the ground.

Now native courage only ruled his fear,
With sober, cool, and deep collected thought;
And not the fumes of Ramsey's home-brew'd beer,
As when at first the demon's hole he sought.

When thus compos'd his honest home-taught brain,
He all at once began to think aright,
And saw that all was but a farce and vain,
'Twas but the wind—this phantom of the night.

For thus dislodging the old haunting ghost
From out its awful subterraneous cave,
He often got the peasant's hearty toast,—
"Here's long may live Jem-beg-Kermeend, the brave!"

* * * * *

When summer ope'd its fragrant rosy morn,
Shedding a lustre o'er each bank and brae,
And gentle breezes waved the reedy corn,
And trefoil-clover made the fields look gay,

I've stray'd along my native Corna's banks,
When pleasing fancies fired my youthful breast,
To view the milk-white lambkins play their pranks
As by their dams they fondly were caress'd;

A striking emblem of the youthful mind,
Ere life's corroding care oppress'd the heart,
The certain fate of all the human kind,
For every year brings on its careful part,

Mixing the promised joy, whene'er possess'd,
With an alloy of disappointing pain,
For as the sage of ancient days confess'd—
The life of man is frivolous and vain.

But Hope, sweet Hope! man's ever-soothing friend,
And kind companion thro' this wilderness;
Thou never fail'st to cheer him to the end
Of life's dark journey with thy promised bliss.

The world to him a gloomy void would be,
Without thy aid to cheer his present care,
There's not a bliss but what he owes to thee,
And e'en in grief thou tak'st thy pleasing share,

Soft'ning perplexing life's most goading dart
By thy sweet prospects for some future day,
Which never fail to cheer the drooping heart
That would to grief become an easy prey:

But far more welcome thou in youthful dreams,
Unmix'd with sad experience of time,
When nought but joy from ev'ry object teems,
And all on earth seems pleasing and sublime.

Such were thy all-endearing charms to me
When first thou foundst me in my humble cot,
Urging me always to adhere to thee,
And certain happiness should be my lot.

Thus led by thee, I thought the world to roam,
Thy promised joys at once to realize,
But, oh! full soon I miss'd my peaceful home,
And from my folly learnt to be more wise:

Yet still thou 'st never left me to my fate,
When overwhelm'd with the harsh cares of life,
To cheer my heart thou never wert too late,
But soothed my soul, when all within was strife.

* * * * *

Where Summer's solstice cheers the northern sky,
Enlivening nature with his genial beam,
Tinging the blady grass with varied dye,
And gilding hill and valley, wood and stream,

As clear refraction brings his beams to view
Within the purple oriental air,
The rose-bud bends beneath the morning dew,
Clad round with moss most beautifully fair;

But when shoot forth his horizontal rays,
At his approach with more than swift career,
He all his renovating power displays
Throughout the whole diurnal hemisphere.

But, simple vale! tho' still he shines on thee,
Sweet homely treats no longer cheer thy soil;
Thy peaceful groves, once more than dear to me,
Have now become to luxury a spoil.

Oh! where is now thy happy rural band,
That was the pride of all the country side?
Alas, drove out by barter's iron hand
To other shores their pittance to provide.

How alter'd from thy former happy state,
When nought but joy resounded through thy lawn
From thy young fam'ly, sporting round the gate,
Blythe as the lark to greet the morning dawn!

The sun-flower's disc of golden yellow hue
Stood high erect to meet the morning ray,
While round its stalk the polyanthus grew,
And ope'd its leaves to hail the coming day;

The ancient elder that o'ertopp'd the wall
With spreading branches o'er the strawy thatch,
From which in boyhood I've had many a fall,
Endeavouring the callow brood to catch;

The gliding stream, that murmur'd gently past,
Reflected all that on its margin grew,
Each flowery shrub, and branching tree that cast
A deeper shade, were seen in colours true;

The thrifty bees, beneath the summer-beam,
Sipp'd the sweet nectar of each beauteous flower,
And nature seem'd with insect-life to teem,
Whilst bloom'd each hedge and every woodbine bower;

The speckled trout within the crystal well [fly;
With quick-eyed glance brought down its victim
The warbling choir within the sylvan dell
Lifted their artless melody on high;

Thy gravell'd walks, border'd on either side
With thyme and sives, and brushwood evergreen,
And garden-flowers in all their summer pride,
Made up a homely and a rural scene.

When summer breezes came with sudden gush,
And shook the fruit from the projecting trees
O'er Corna's stream, I with my thorny bush
The gliding apples eagerly would seize,

And with their cluster in the frothy pool
I've stopt to play, and view their rosy cheek,
Regardless of my good old mistress' school,
Playing the truant by the river-creek:

Though careless she my childish faults to scan,
Where I had been she would severely ask,
Saying, "My boy, to make a clever man
Thou must pay strict attention to thy task;

Thou'rt but a dunce as yet must be confess'd,
And many months thou hast been here with me,
Though with great fondness I have thee carress'd,
Thou scarcely canst repeat thy A, B, C;

Remember thou hast got to learn to spell
From Thomas Dilworth (best of spelling-books),
Put words together, and to read as well,
And with thy pen make ladles and pothooks."

But this was all as Greek to my poor brain,
For names of cattle and of mountain sheep
Were all that my thick block-head could contain,
No foreign subject could it learn or keep.

So kind was she unto her little band,
That they loved her as tho' their second mother,
Strictly adhering to her wise command—
"To mind their books and dearly love each other."

Sweet recollection pictures out the spot,
Within the corner of a lay-land field,
Where stood her humble and her lonely cot,
Whose gable-end an aged thorn did shield.

Her happy little group in rows were seen
On rude-made stools of native mountain-pine,
As in her chair most patient and serene
She'd seat herself, repeating every line

That each had got to learn by heart that day
Ere she allow'd these urchins any dinner;
And to the youngest she would kindly say,
" My dears, be sure that you keep clean your
Primmer."—

Thus ruled the rustic literary dame
Her little tribe, most tenderly and kind;
And truly pious, she at once became
A right instructress to the youthful mind.

A stranger she, from Yorkshire as 't was said,
Deluded by a wretch to leave her home
When she was but a young and artless maid
And tempted from her virtuous ways to roam;

But soon he left her to her mournful fate
Upon the world, with character undone;
Though deep repentance came, its course was late,
For now her life of misery had begun;

In this sad state she stray'd to Mona's shore
To seek that solace which her home denied,
And from its rocks she never wander'd more,
But there in hope of full redemption died.

Thus ended she her injured chequer'd life,
Regretted by her friendly neighbours round,
Bidding adieu unto this world of strife,
She hid her grief 'neath Maughold's burying ground.

Oh! where is now that villain, lost to shame,
That first did blight her tender virgin bloom?
Is there a man on earth that would not blame
The monster's crime, or mourn his victim's doom?

Perhaps in childhood's days she was the joy
And expectation of a mother kind,
Who oft would pleasingly her time employ
In planting virtue in her youthful mind.

But I am wandering from my Corna's vale,
In tracing thus at length her weary lot;—
Her worth deserves this tributary tale—
Return we to that fondly cherish'd spot:

Those boggy meadows where wild poppies grew
Of crimson colour 'mongst the ripening hay,
The cluster'd bells of simple sky-like blue,
In all the pride of summer's full display.

Oft when a boy, just as the lark as blythe,
I'd take their breakfast to the mowers there,
And see them swing with nervous strength the scythe,
And of their leavings have my proffer'd share.

When noontide rays with sultry sheen did pour,
They sought the shade beneath a rick of hay
To wait my coming with sweet milk and sour,
For cooling drink, and sometimes curd and whey.

The yellow corn when ripen'd in the ear
Call'd forth the rustics to its gathering in,
With sharpen'd sickles in their hands to shear,
And choose the right-hand rig, the race to win.

To be the first to share the hearty fun
Beneath the shade 'mongst the luxuriant grass,
There round the stooks with many a playful run
Each lad would chase and oft trip up his lass.

While thus the youth the victory to achieve,
In cutting down the lengthen'd rig throughout,
The aged made the bands and tied each sheave,
Cheering them on with many a hearty shout.

When cut the barley, and the full-ear'd wheat,
And snugly stack'd all ready for the flails,
They on the oats their labour would repeat,
When pass'd autumnal equinoctial gales.

Then Kitty, eldest of the youthful band
Of females, challenged all within the field
To be the first to cut with friendly hand
The last oat sheaf the farm that year did yield,

To form the *Maiden** in its usual style
With ribbon-bows and plaited straw-made arms,†
Then with a light-heel'd skip and playful smile,
Which added beauty to her native charms,

She bore it forth in triumph in her hand,
Leading the shearers to the highest ground,
Where met the rural and the happy band,
Whose hearty cheers did through the air resound,

Proclaiming loudly thus, with three times three
Expressive cheers, the welcome harvest-home;
Then homeward bend their course, in mirthful glee,
Where the brown ale o'ertopp'd the jug with foam

Fresh from the spigot of a hissing keg
Of famed Mylrea's‡ best double-ex entire,
And hotly pepper'd§ by old thrifty Peg,
With jovial pranks the rustics to inspire.

* The last handful of corn, decorated with ribands, and placed over the dresser, until it was replaced by another on the following season.

† Two plaits of straw, placed on each side to represent arms.

‡ The name of an eminent brewer who resided in Ramsey.

§ This is a custom which prevails in the island at all festivals of the above description.

When seated all, each on a three-legg'd stool,
The hopeful lads and lasses, pair and pair,—
Waiting the haggis in the dish to cool,—
Would make appointments for next Ramsey fair.

When the host had offer'd up the grace,
And cut the haggis with his horn-haft knife,
Each honest rustic with a smiling face
Gave ev'ry credit to the cooking wife.

The good old sire proposed the yearly toast,
"May he that did come in the first this day
Of his own partner as a good wife boast,
Ere hawthorn's bloom proclaims the coming May."

The well-known pair were seen full soon to blush
As all the toast with three times three did crown,
Whilst the good dame repeated, "Lads, hush! hush!
I now declare, I'll give the wedding-gown,

And feather-bed, of sixty pounds in weight,
And curtains, made from my own spinning too,
And sheets and bolsters, for the bridal night;—
Now, my sweet Kate, what more, love, can I do?"

"What canst thou do, my Peg?" exclaims the host,
"Why give them Bridgen, first of milking cows—
Of such a pair Kirk-Maughold well may boast,
And they shall have the best the farm allows.

Encouraged thus, the young and bashful pair
Exchanged soft looks of innocence and love,
In which the rest could not but help to share,
While the good dame call'd blessings from above

Upon their union,—should it e'er take place,—
And hoped their nuptials, by divine decree,
Would be to multiply the human race,
And that they might their children's children see

In peace, and love, and perfect happiness,
In future years when she should be no more,
But long removed from sorrow and distress
To great Emanuel's everlasting shore.

The dame now made her exit with the sire,—
Leaving the youths to love and merriment,—
And sat them snugly by the kitchen fire
Rehearsing over how to pay their rent.

The parish fiddler—well he loved the ale,—
Then took his seat close by his heart's delight,
With a determination not to fail
To give it a full benefit that night.

He drew the rosin up and down the hair
Of his strung bow, and screw'd each peg well tight,
Declaring often though the strain was fair
That strings would snap, and leave him in a plight.

But when the pegs had ceased the strings to snap,
And yielded not to his adjusting strain,
Each maid took off her bonnet and her cap
To join the dance with her intended swain.

The *Champion** was the first to lead his lass,†
Who was ere hawthorn bloom'd to be his bride,
Up and then down the well-shorn plat of grass
That did the stack-yard and the barn divide,

To meet the second pair, the reel to form,
Four-handed, with an unaffected grace,
And with the good old maxim to conform,
They join'd their hands and then whirl'd round apace

Towards the left hand, then towards the right,
Then all at once they'd quit each other's hand
And cross alternately most blythe and light,
While the impatient swains their turns demand;

* The first who cut down his rig, the last heat of cutting.

† His partner, who had the honour of cutting the last handful of corn to form the "*Maiden.*"

For well they knew the fiddler soon would fail
In holding out, that each might have a turn,
While he kept still replenishing with ale
The old brown jug, in size next to the churn;

And so it proved, for ere the second reel
Had led unto the courage-testing jig,
The barns and stacks begun round him to wheel,
And down he fell, and off came hat and wig.

When disappointed thus, each loving pair
Betook themselves unto their seats once more,
And for sweet vocal harmony prepare
To drown the prostrate drunken fiddler's snore.

The *Champion*, of course the first to sing,
Struck up a lively and a loving ditty,
Making the rafters of the old barn ring
As thus he tuned his rural lay to Kitty:—

KITTY OF THE GREEN.

As down tow'rds Corna's flowing brook
One morn I took my route,
To angle with my line and hook,
And catch the spotted trout,
I met by chance upon my way,
So gentle and serene,
A perfect beauty;—need I say
'Twas Kitty of the Green?

I stood awhile in reverie
Ere I could her address,
For something strange came over me
Which I could not express,
When I beheld her auburn hair,
In ringlet tresses flow
Adown her well-form'd shoulders fair,
And cheeks of ruddy glow.

But when her eyes of hazle shade,
Sparkling beneath her brow,
Their first impression on me made,
I felt I know not how;
Suffice to say if I had been
Great Ballacregan's heir,
My charming Kitty of the Green
Would be the matron there.

Yea, if I'd been of Stanley's line,
Or Derby's royal race,
She'd as the Queen of Mannin* shine,
The Tinwall† Court to grace.
But oh! how can I now express
How glow'd this heart of mine,
When first I heard her lips confess,
"Young angler, I am thine."

* The Manx for Isle of Man.

† An artificial hill near St. John's, where the ancient kings of Man used to assemble their court in the open atmosphere.

At these last words young Kitty blush'd with
shame,
Hiding her face behind her lover's chair,
Though in her heart she could not Hughy blame,
She heartily wish'd that night she'd not been
there.

The next in turn was call'd to tune his lyre
In praise of Etty of the farm Renwee,
At all the maidens' and the swains' desire,
And e'en herself did to the call agree,

With bashful blushes playing o'er her cheek,
And sparkling eyes with glist'ning tears be-
dew'd,
While all the maids, with sympathy so meek,
Her love-embarrass'd situation view'd.

But when her lover struck the tuneful chord
Unto her praise so simply and so kind,
The mirthful band the rural song encored,
Saying it was exactly to their mind.

Then he, with self-exulting modesty,
Attuned his voice to suit the simple strain,
In all the pride of rustic honesty,
And as here follows tried his lay again:—

ETTY OF RENWEE.

One morn, as o'er the flow'ry lawn
Sweet gentle zephyrs blew,
I bent my way just at the dawn,
Ere rose the spangling dew,
Along the margin of the green,
The fleecy flocks to see,
Where stray'd, bedeck'd like summer's queen,
Sweet Etty of Renwee.

She wore a garland and a crown
Of interwoven flowers,
Which she had pluck'd along the down
From Nature's simple bowers:—
This sweet enchanting merry maid
Skipp'd lightly o'er the lea,
And when I ask'd her name, she said,
"I'm Etty of Renwee."

Art thou, indeed, my love, said I,
That blooming flower fair?—
To sit thee down then be not shy,
And share this balmy air:
"Let's not sit down, I need not rest,
But come to yonder tree
And see the warbling linnets' nest,"
Said Etty of Renwee.

Who could deny this sweet request
From such persuasive lips?
And as the lamb as pure her breast,
When round its dam it skips:
She tript along the dewy grass
Just as the air as free,
This fair and charming Manx young lass,—
Sweet Etty of Renwee.

She led me to the fragrant thorn,
To see the callow brood,
And hand in hand that blissful morn
We roved in happy mood:
The blackbird on the highest spray
Did with the thrush agree
At our approach to tune their lay
To Etty of Renwee.

Her accent sweet—her sparkling eye
My bosom made to glow,
Though inexperience made me shy,
It was my fate to know
That something latent in my heart
Was left alone for thee
To bring to light, by beauty's art,—
Sweet Etty of Renwee!

As thus went round so merrily the songs,
With pure and unaffected heart and voice,

A wag took up the poker and the tongs
To ape the fiddler with his grating noise,

And sung in native tongue the ancient rhyme
Which cheer'd the *Melya**-night in days of yore,
Composed by Manxmen back in olden time,
Ere pride invaded happy Mona's shore.—

"MOLACARANE.†

"O, Molacarane,
Where got'st thou thy store?
I got it embedded
Deep, deep, 'neath the moor,
Tra ma lomercon dage ou me."‡

The rest of this most ancient song
Is so laboriously long,
To sing it through would all the while
This mirthful scene both mar and spoil.

The next he chose p'rhaps I may venture
In this rude verse of mine to enter;
It treats of scenes in dark December,
And well do I those scenes remember:—

* The Manx for harvest-home.

† This once popular Manx song was composed on a man of that name residing in the parish of Andreas, who was said to have found a crockful of money when he was digging turf in the bog.

‡ The Manx for "When alone thou left'st me."

TA NA KEERY FO-NAUGHTY.*

Come, rise up, my lads,
And haste to the mountain,
The snow-drifts are deep on
Each valley and fountain,
Our sheep in the nooks
Are cover'd all over,
Put on your *carranes*,†
And call the dog Rover.

And arm yourselves, lads,
With the long-probing poles,
And Rover will lead you
To their round breathing holes;‡
Near Corna-Chesgia
They're buried, no doubt,
Then, lads, down that way
Be sure take your route.

And do not delay
In your beds fast asleep,
While smother'd and perish'd
Lie my round hundred sheep,

* "The sheep beneath the snow:" a reminiscential translation of an old Manx song.

† Sandals made of green hide.

‡ After the sheep are covered with the snow, the heat of their breath forms round holes which afford them a partial ventilation, and also attract the scent of the dog.

Beneath the white snow
That is gathering fast
Around them in flakes
From the furious blast.

As they the wag so loudly did encore,
In honour of the good old native songs,
The noise awoke the fiddler from his snore
Ere could be hid the poker and the tongs.

"Who dares to mock my fiddle and my bow?"
He said, as he came scrambling forth to light,
"By the *Three Legs*,* this night I'll lay him low
For thus encroaching on my fiddling-right."

But the wag the sudden threat evaded
By hiding snugly underneath the straw,
While the rest old Illam soon persuaded
To sit while Kit another jug would draw,

And not take notice of the mimic fool,
Assuring him none wish'd him any harm:
So they endeavour'd Illam's wrath to cool
With the kind help of barley's soothing charm.

Though reign'd, full-orb'd, the mellow harvest-moon,
To light the neighbouring rustics to each cot,

* The coat of arms of the island.

Old Illam-Nelly thought it yet too soon
To make a start while foam'd the brimful pot,

Until the dame with modest air appear'd,
Saying, "My children, you must now disperse."
She, above all the rest, old Illam fear'd,
And to the fiddling art was much averse;

And Illam, as well, hating her pious lore,—
It being at variance with his trade,—
Put on his hat, and stagger'd to the door,
And for the year his drunken exit made.

MONA'S ISLE.

CANTO III.

STERN Winter spreads his mantle o'er the sky,
And Sol no more appears to tow'r on high,
The earth ascends the bright ecliptic road,
Rejoicing 'neath her animated load,
While northern climes are chill'd in Cancer's claws,*
The solar heat th' antarctic regions thaws,
And Capricornus shuns th' optic gaze,
And shrinks behind the clear refulgent blaze,
And darkness shrouds the arctic circle o'er,
Save when reflected by the moon the shore,
Ice-bound and drear, in that most frigid zone,
Where six months' night reigns cheerlessly alone.
Thus strides the god of seasons o'er each clime
Throughout all space, in majesty sublime;
The earth advances in her slanting† orb,
That all her surface may by turns absorb
Its annual share of the refreshing ray
That ever issues from the king of day,

* The earth is in Cancer when the sun appears in Capricorn.
† The obliquity of the ecliptic.

To keep in being all that's here below,
For nature's essence from his fountains flow.

I'll leave the earth thus trundling on her course,
Maintaining still the grand primeval force
Which she received from the great Maker's hand,
And turn my thoughts towards my native land,
Where wintry storms sweep o'er the cheerless plain,
And swelling billows foam along the main,
Spending their fury 'gainst the rocky shore,
Amongst the caverns with a hollow roar,
Forcing the sea-gull from its rocky cell
To seek a shelter in the woodland dell;
While frozen flakes come floating from the north
On the keen blast mix'd with the ocean's froth,
Dark'ning the air, and shedding gloom around,
As wrapt in snow becomes the cheerless ground.

As Night advances, deck'd in sable shroud,
And whistling winds proclaim the storm aloud,
The wind-bound barques bear up for Ramsey bay
To cast their anchors in its holding clay;
Clenching the cable to the windlass fast,
To make more sure they bend it round the mast,
Ready to cut should she attempt to drive
T'wards rocks and shoals; and their best skill contrive
To trim the sails and to the harbour steer
Around the sturdy ever-friendly pier.

This last attempt to save their useful lives
Unto their children and their loving wives,
Has been achieved by Manxmen when the storm
Blew most vehemently,—that to perform
Such deeds of skill to gain the harbour's bounds
Might well become the Deal-men in the Downs:
But when once gain'd the north side of the pier,
They have no longer any cause to fear,
If they are quick the smack to wear or stay,
And shorten sail in time to stop her way,
And keep her head on to the angry swell
Which scarcely now the ramparts can repel;
But while the hardy Manxman holds the helm,
He dares the sea his barque to overwhelm,
And round the corner he with caution steers
Where all the fleet lie snugly moor'd in tiers;
Making the hawser to the bollard fast,
And then the searching lot is quickly cast
To seek for one from 'mongst the circle round
Who has to stop to watch her take the ground,
While all the rest go up to mother Quayle's,
To drown their hardships in her homebrew'd ales,
And sing their songs,—regardless of the blast
That blows outside, so long as stands the mast
In the old smack;—and when recedes the tide
They in the shelter of the town confide:
And thus the mariners pass the winter's night
In jovial songs with hearts most blythe and light,
Passing around the nut-brown barley broth
In brimful quarts o'ertopp'd with hoary froth.

Now, from the aspect of the rocky shore,
Return we to the inland scenes once more.
The country folk from labour hard retire
And form a circle round their kitchen fire,
The lads bring in the reedy hemp to peel,
While lasses pass the band around the wheel,
And well adjust the peg of crooked kern,*
Within the fly that spins around the pearn,
To lead the thread along in reg'lar lays
The bobbin on that round the spindle plays;
And perhaps the neighbouring swains would gather in
To card the wool, each for his lass to spin,
And tell their tales of innocence with glee,
How one did pass the old thorn haunted tree,
One stormy night, up to his knees in mire,
And saw the ghost with eyes like blazing fire,
In shape and form just like the shaggy stot
That haunts poor Alice Curdal's lonely cot;—
And when another, passing Ballaglass,
Returning home from courting his young lass,
Saw a deep shadow, ghastly and immense,
Standing between him and the thorny fence,
Which made the blood recoil within each vein,
And for a moment almost turn'd his brain,
Ere he had time to trust unto his heels,
And take the bye-road leading 'cross the fields;
But ere he reach'd his cot, bold chanticleer
Began to crow and banish'd all his fear,

* The Rowen tree.

For when his clarion ushers in the day
The ghost no longer on the earth can stay.
And so the stories went around the house,
While sat the youngster, mute as any mouse,
Believing all that he had heard them tell,
For he himself e'en then could see as well
Such ghostly shapes as were that night described,
And thus he their credulity imbibed
Ere reason dawn'd upon his tender age,
Or ere he yet had learnt vast Nature's page
Of sacred truth, traced by the Maker's hand,
Which still extant eternally shall stand
To raise the grovelling mind of man on high
Above this earth, and teach him how to die ;—
For truth alone sheds light throughout the whole
Of His vast empire, long as the ages roll
Along the awful nothingness of space,
Which baffles all the art of man to trace :—
And such the impression made upon his mind,
That e'en in manhood he is oft inclined,
Through what in youth he was obliged to hear
Of ghosts and witches, to give way to fear ;
So apt is memory fondly to retrace
Those early scenes which time cannot efface ;
E'en philosophic reasonings of truth
Cannot obliterate the scenes of youth,
For such the case, the first impression made
Upon the mind will through man's life pervade
In guiding all his actions here below,
It is the fount from whence those actions flow.

Then, oh! how careful parents ought to be
To keep their offspring from such trammels free,
For superstition down from Adam's time
Has been the source of ignorance and crime.
How strange that man with "a reflective mind"
Should be to such "delusive" ways inclined;
But man, alas! is prone to set aside
All, save the love that ministers to pride;
Rejects the humbling doctrines of his creed—
Neglects to pray, or holy book to read—
Shuns the appointed place of public prayer—
Scorns the mild preacher's warning voice to hear,
Seeking, in self-imposed rites, that peace
Which only grace can furnish or increase:—
Grace! gift of God! it keeps us low and meek,
Points to obedience, learns us how to seek
The faith that is in Jesus, and creates
New views of life and doctrine:—now, he hates
That which he once admired, and feels how poor
All efforts of *mere* knowledge t' unlock the door
Where Wisdom sits—true source of all *sound* lore,
Stamping with value what was vain before.
It clears the mental vision too, and scares
Whole troops of fairies, ghosts, and glamour fears;
And lifts the soul on Faith's immortal wings
To contemplate on more exalted things.
But to my theme and song of boyhood's days,
Which memory retrospective yet surveys.

When dark December crowns the wintry scene,
And stormy winds, most bitterly and keen,
Rush o'er the lofty heights and plains below,
And fill the nooks with heaps of drifting snow,
Where highland sheep in vain some shelter seek
From the fierce storm that sweeps the mountain bleak;
The threatening aspect, opening on the sight,
Proclaims the coming of a dismal night;
The lowland beasts forsake the cheerless field,
Which neither food nor shelter now doth yield,
By instinct and by frequent custom led
To seek their fodder 'neath the shelt'ring shed;
More favour'd they than sheep within the dell,
Which to find shelter have been led as well,
For they no cov'ring have 'tween earth and sky,
But doom'd by fate beneath the snow to die;
Though long ere morn dispell'd the nightly shade,
The husbandmen towards the mountain wade
Thro' heaps of snow, with their long probing poles,*
Whilst Fly directs them to their breathing holes,
With many a bark along the wasteful plain,
Where desolation now appears to reign;
But oft in vain he traces every track
Along the snow, and then returning back
Towards his master, with a mournful look,
As if to say they 've perish'd in the nook,

* The poles are used for two purposes, first to aid the peasants to wade through the snow, and secondly to probe for the sheep when the drifting snow has covered the holes made by their breath.

No holes I've found ere since the sun did rise,
Thus could be traced his meaning in his eyes.
Both swains and dog now from the search retire,
And bear the dismal tidings to the sire,
Who would with manly resignation say,
" The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away;
He rules the fate of flocks on hill and plain,
And all that this round earth and sea contain,
Eternal space his empire and his throne,
His wisdom based on sacred truth alone;
'Tis but a loss to us in wordly sense,
Which the good Lord will kindly recompense,
If we to do his will our best essay,
And strictly venerate the Sabbath-day,
Our loss to us will surely be repaid,
For once the holy bard of Israel said,
'I have been young—now hoary is my head,
Yet have not seen the righteous beg their bread;'
Then let us trust, when this our trouble's past,
Like patient Job, to be more blest at last."
Such was the lore the Manxmen taught their sons,
And such the vein that thro' their manners runs,
Where'er they roam throughout this world of care
They still are first in other's woe to share.
O, pure Religion! much we owe to thee,
When thus we thy perfection early see
Display'd in truth, without a tinge of guile,
For what like thee life's cares can reconcile?

OLD MAY EVE.

When winter's gloom no longer cast
A cloud o'er Mona's isle,
And fields at length, in sweet contrast,
With renovated soil
Began to show their vernal bloom,
And charge the air with rich perfume
Throughout the lowland vales,
While heather-bells, and yellow broom,
Instead of dreary winter's gloom,
Enrobed the highland dales,
The cattle loiter'd from the stall,
Obedient to the herdsman's call,
To range at large the field;
The honeysuckles round did crawl
With mimic life the cottage-wall,
Their fragrance sweet to yield,
And April's kind refreshing showers
Brought forth the moorland simple flowers;
The loving turtles cooed;
The small birds in the thorny bow'rs
Enjoy'd their sweet connubial hours
With their unfeather'd brood,

The partridge from the heights did roam,
To seek a more congenial home
To rear its tender young;
Thus Nature did her charms display
To welcome in the twelfth of May,
From which I take my song.

Back in those days when Superstition's wile
Was rife within my fair and native isle,
And sages strove with unabated toil
'Gainst all who wish'd their ancient ways to foil.
It was the case in that benighted age
That all, from urchin to the tott'ring sage,
Implicitly believed the story true,
That all the witches in the island flew,
At times like crows, transform'd by magic skill,
Or into hares they'd turn themselves at will,
T' evade the scrutiny of human sight,
On old May-eve, at twelve o'clock at night,
To swear their dark allegiancy anew
With Beelzebub and his infernal crew,
To vent their spite upon the human race,
In some sequester'd goblin-haunted place,
Where the Satanic council would appear
To give instructions for th' ensuing year,
And issue mandates of their dark intrigue
To those old witches serving in their league.

Now when arrived th' eleventh of May,
As I have heard old Manxmen say,
Each horse was snugly stall'd,

And cows from off the grassy plain,
Ere Sol had kiss'd the western main,
Were promptly homewards call'd;
The sheep from off the mountain's height
Were drove in flocks to rest that night,
So fraught with pending ill,
Within the wicket of the yard,
That they from witches might be spared
By counteracting skill:—
The rank *bolugh*,* of magic charm,
Th' infernal legions to disarm
Of all their deadly pow'r,
Was strew'd along the cow-house floor,
And round the threshold of the door,
With many a yellow flow'r;
And crosses of the *rowan*† tree
Were form'd by swains in homely glee,
And tied to each cow's tail,
And round the lintels of the bire,‡
To further check their fiendish ire,
If *bolugh*-charm should fail;
For if they once their spell could lay
Upon the kine, they'd pine away
By sure and slow degrees,
And baffle all the good wife's skill
That year her butter-crock to fill,
Or even make a cheese;

* The Manx name given to a yellow weed frequently found in meadows, supposed to possess a charm against witchcraft.

† The mountain ash. ‡ Cow-house.

In vain she'd agitate the cream,
And of new hoards of butter dream,
 And plunge and plunge again
The staff into the spell-bound churn,
With many a skilful twisting turn,
 And shoulder-aching pain:—
She'd make the kitchen poker hot,
To counteract the spiteful plot
 Of the suspected dame,
By plunging it into the cream,
To make the spell fly off in steam,
 But still no butter came.
In vain she'd try to make a cheese,
The whey from 'mongst the curd to squeeze
 Surpass'd her, tho' well skill'd;
For e'en the rennet's influence
Had caught the fatal consequence
 Before the calf was kill'd.
To guard against each dire event,
The old May-eve was yearly spent,
 Partly as I have said;
But what I have yet to relate
About this scene of ancient date,
 Took place within the glade.

When now protected by each charm
All living things upon the farm;
The youthful swains would take their flight
To some commanding neighb'ring height,
And set the crackling furze alight,

Which by creating such a blaze
As fairly mock'd the moon's pale rays,
And well kept up till break of day,
Would scare the warlock host away.

That eve the speckl'd thrush had press'd
His brooding mate upon the nest,
Then hopp'd upon a neighb'ring spray
To charm her with his ev'ning lay,
And placed, when he had ceased to sing,
His mellow lute beneath his wing.
Then all the small birds in the glade
Would cease their mates to serenade,
And drop to rest upon a thorn
To wait the first coy peep of morn.
Ah! little did the songsters know
How close at hand the hour of woe,
When the destructive brands were seen
Advancing 'cross the lowland green,—
Like those nocturnal fiery damps*
Which oft are seen amongst the swamps
To dance with many a wondrous prank,
When charged the air with vapour dank,
And oft delude the courting swain
Into some marshy bog or drain,
Mistaking it to be the light
From some lone cot that met his sight;
Thus led astray to meet his fate
Just as he thought to gain the gate,—

* The ignis fatuus.

So might be seen on old May night
The torches' zigzag glaring light,
Winding their course along the plain
Borne by the zealous rustic train;
But when they did the brand apply,
The parent-birds alarm'd would fly,
With frightful screams, around each nest:
It might have moved the hardest breast,
To hear the helpless wee-things squeak
With outstretch'd neck and open'd beak,
As if imploring for relief,
Thus adding to the old birds' grief;—
Alas! it was beyond their pow'r
To save them in this evil hour:
The red destructive element
Was raging round their little tent,
Which cost them many a weary day
To hedge around with moss and hay,
And line with due parental care
With interwoven wool and hair.
The flames had done their ravage now
Leaving behind the bare black bough,
And scorch'd to death the callow-brood
Lay 'mongst the mouldering embers strew'd.

Ere chanticleer, with clarion shrill,
Would break the enchantment of the *gill*,*
Where sat old Nick in state that night,
He and his suite took to their flight,

* A provincial name for a glen.

And left old Kate* in full possession
Of his black art, and at discretion
To initiate those upon probation,
And give each hag her proper station,
Tho' first she'd Hornie to consult
Who best t' appoint to *Crag na Mult*,†
Being the most important post
Of all Kirk Maughold's warlock coast.
Now Kate to each her post decreed,
And all assembled had agreed
To put their witchcraft to the test,
And for their master do their best,
When hark! that sound a warning brings,
'Tis chanticleer's shrill voice that rings;
Uprose the witches great and small
Obedient to the warning call—
As ravens from their carrion flee
To seek the shelter of the tree,
When midst their feast they startled hear
The fowler's gun loud ringing near—
So did each beldame take to flight,
As rang that sound across the night.

Kate took her course to *Glen reagh Rushen*,‡
Where long she'd lived with Nan, her cousin,

* An old woman who was a special delegate of Hornie in consequence of her right of seniorship, and skill in the cabalistic art.

† An eminence in Kirk Maughold, four miles from Ramsey, on the Douglas road, famed of old for being the haunt of the higher grade of witches.

‡ A glen in Kirk Christ Rushen, famed for being the resort of all kinds of supernatural beings.

Whose counsel she full often drew
When mischief dire she wish'd to brew,
And there was known for many a year
To keep the country-side in fear.
At her command the *gobogs dole**
Would rend the nets in many a hole,
And liberate the herring shoal.
She'd raise the wind with sudden blast
And leave the boat without a mast;
And drive her on the leeward shore
To perish midst the breakers' roar.
Indeed 'twas said she could out-do
Old Nick himself, and all his crew;
And his Satanic mirth provoke
By many a wily witchcraft joke;
For she was up to all the art
Himself and council could impart;
But notwithstanding all her power,
She could not see th' impending hour
That frown'd upon her guilty plan
And on her mischief laid a ban,
For as it chanced a Manxman stood
In ambush near a copse of wood,
Where all the plain he could command,
A loaded rifle in his hand,
Ready to take a deadly aim,
And put a stop to her wild game.—
He was not long left in suspense
Before her work she did commence;

* The blind Dog Fish.

At first on raven wings she flew,
As if to take a gen'ral view,
And scan around with cautious gaze
If aught observed her warlock-ways,
Giving the Manxman ample scope
To realize his sanguine hope,—
He points his tube towards her wing,
Then draws the trigger of the spring,
But to his great astonishment
No sparkling fire flew from the flint,
The hammer struck with sound as dead
As if 't had been a piece of lead.
During the interval of time
It took the rifle to reprime,
The hag had lighted from the air
And changed herself into a hare,
Which sprang close by to where he stood,
Freezing with fear the Manxman's blood,
But when recover'd once again,
A happy thought flash'd o'er his brain,
That he had heard his grandam say,
How many a warlock in her day
Was shot to death by silver balls,
And now the very fact recalls,
That both his wrist-bands did attach
Two silver studs, which few could match,
For they were heir-looms of his granny,
And much admired by his Nanny:
But willing not to lose this chance
He now most boldly did advance,

Tearing the buttons from his sleeve
This great adventure to achieve,
He ramm'd them down with tardy hand,
And said, "*shee yee*,"* with self-command,
As he the silver charm let fly
Which shot the creature in the thigh,
Just as it leap'd across the ditch,
And rid Glen Rushen of the witch,
For it was said a wounded hag
At break of morn was seen to lag,
With hobbling steps as though in pain,
Leaving a blood-track on the plain,
And further, that whilst in this plight,
Old Hornie seized her in his right.

Thus ended the career of Kate,
And when her cousin learnt her fate,
She very wisely took the hint
That men were now on mischief bent—
Would use the sense that few of yore
Had ever shown in force before,
To pop her off some luckless day,
And make of her a lawful prey
For his Satanic majesty,
Long ere her contract-day was nigh:
For when she 'fore his council stood
And wrote in letters with her blood
Her lineage, and her Christian name,
And vow'd no further right or claim

* An exclamation in the Manx language, meaning "Preserve me," &c. &c.

To Providence—but *his* alone,
When mortal life from her had flown,
And not till then—but while on earth
She was to revel in her mirth.
That she might live a quiet life
She now resolved to end the strife
Existing 'twixt her and mankind,
And set to work her crafty mind
How best both parties she could please;
For she had taken high degrees
In the dissimulating art,
And studied well the human heart.
Her dark alliance with old Nick
She still most scrupulously strict
Perform'd unto the very letter,
For few than her own self knew better
How to evade each binding clause
In Beelzebub's infernal laws;
And as for mere mankind to teaze
She 'd do 't by proxy at her ease:
And so it proved, for never more
Was the old haggy seen to soar,
Stride legs upon her beesom stick,
Or play a solitary trick
Of her own wonted witchery
On either poor or gentry,
But lived retired on the bog
With her pet sheep and faithful dog,
Which also to a tale gave rise
That they were witches in disguise.

As often as old Coaly* howl'd
Some great disaster was foretold;
And when her chanticleer would *gerram*†
Old wives would say "*chee yee drow marrum.*"‡
Yet, still her former fame did spread
From the Dhoon bridge to Maughold head;
For it was said, since she retired,
That she the fairies often hired
As her auxiliaries at night,
Being more commodious for flight
Than her corporeal candidates;||
They thus perform'd more marvellous feats
Than could a hare or carrion crow,
For elves could through the key-hole go,
Or through a crevice in the wall,
Or any chink though e'er so small,
To administer her dark design
Without a trace of earthly sign.
They'd ransack all the cupboards through,
And play a pretty how-d'-ye-do.
They next would go in airy flocks
To see that all the water-crocks
Were rightly placed, and brimming full,
That each might have a quenching pull:
But woe be to the sleeping maid
Were crocks not fill'd and duly laid:§

* The name of her dog. † Crow. ‡ Peace be with me.

|| Those witches alluded to as being on probation, ere they were allowed to take high degrees in witchcraft.

§ This custom of filling the water-crocks with clean water, for the use of the fairies, before the family would venture to their beds, was strictly complied with by the Manx in former days, which water was never used for any other purpose, but thrown into the sink each morning.

For once it chanced, in days gone by,
That the good dame to bed did hie,
Forgetting all about the water,
And sacrificed her only daughter
To many a ling'ring year of pain—
Her case no doctor could explain—
For on that very luckless night
The fairies came, and at first sight
Descried the matron's gross neglect,
And without waiting to reflect
They flew towards the daughter's bed,
And in her sleep the virgin bled,
Tradition says not in what part,
Altho' no doubt 'twas near the heart:
They introduced their lancets keen
To carry out their vengeful spleen,
In drawing, whilst the dame did snore,
Her daughter's vitals from the core
Into an heir-loom china mug,
Then hid it 'neath the chimney-lug,
That while it wasted day by day,
The virgin too would pine away
And die,—when no more blood was there
To vanish slowly into air.*
But ere the fatal day arrived
Old Nelly† by her skill contrived

* The death of many young women has been attributed to the above superstition in the island.

† An old woman supported by the charity of the public, by receiving from each farm-house a plateful of oatmeal, which in the Isle of Man is the custom to support the indigent and aged.

T' explore the mystery of the spell,
But by what means she ne'er would tell.
But here it may suffice to say,
That on a stormy winter's day
She enter'd with her poke and staff,—
Found the dame and her better-half
In deep affliction for their child,
Who sat, with aspect meek and mild,
Wrapt up in blankets from the cold
In many a well-adjusted fold.
Old Nelly then tuck'd up her gown,
Untied her poke and laid it down;
And sought her well-known resting seat
Close by the cheerful blazing peat;
And in due order did proceed
To cut the stimulating weed,
And charge her short and coal-black pipe,
Giving its stem a graceful wipe
When she the soothing bowl had fired;
Then most respectfully retired
As far within the chimney-cheek
As was convenient from the reek;*
Taking a survey round each shelf,
She to the dame address'd herself—
"My blessing on my *Mannin veen*,†
And on the heir of Ballaqueen;‡
Full well I knew him when a boy,
And witness'd all the mother's joy

* Smoke. † Dear Isle of Man.
‡ The father of the sick girl.

To see his youthful heart inclined
To feed the aged poor and blind.
He oft would urge her of her store
Of meal to give a trifle more ;
And now, when I am press'd with age,
And on the verge of nature's stage,
It makes my wither'd heart to glow
That I one blessing can bestow
On you, and the afflicted one,
Whose sinking form a spell is on.
This night, at twelve, come here alone,
And underneath this very stone
You'll find a china mug or cup,
Which you will take, then break it up,
And throw the pieces in the fire;
Then quickly to your bed retire,
And you will see your child at length
Slowly resume her wonted strength."
Her words proved true, for soon the maid
"Began to thrive,"—as old wives said;
Her cheeks resumed their wonted hue
And she a comely woman grew ;*
And always saw an ample stock
Of good spring water in each crock
Before she ventured to her bed
Mindful to what neglect had led.
Such were the pranks that fairies play'd,
Tho' many a well-schemed plan was laid

* I have heard, when a boy, the above traditional tale often told by aged persons, under the conviction that the story was strictly true.

By Ballawhane and many more,
Who skill'd in astrologic lore,
Their dark enchantments to explore,
And send them to their native Styx
No more on man to play their tricks;
But they were proof 'gainst all their skill,
And kept possession of the *gill*,
Where oft Kate's coz. was seen to stray
At break of morn, and close of day,
T' engage their service when she needed,
And thus she in her plans succeeded,
Until the poor old creature died,
Grossly neglected and belied.

In these proceedings we descry
A relic of those days gone by
When dark Credulity enshrined
In ignorance the human mind;
When Cruelty, with gory hand,
Dealt devastation through the land,
With that infernal foe to man,
Grim Superstition, in the van;
When men unsheath'd the murd'rous steel,
And 'neath the guise of holy zeal
Implored Omnipotence divine
To aid them in their dark design.

Thank heaven, the cloud is nearly past
That gave those monsters birth,

And Truth's bright rays are covering fast
The long-benighted earth.

Tho' tyrants yet, e'en at this hour,
Still crush their fellow man,
Short shall be their unhallowed pow'r,
For knowledge has began

To pour her beams, from east to west
O'er earth from pole to pole,
At great Jehovah's high behest
T' illuminate the soul.

Though slowly yet its course appears
Along life's thorny ways,
The day shall come, in later years,
When with refulgent blaze

Its rays shall shine from heaven above
On man throughout all space,
And clothe with philanthropic love
His soul with god-like grace;—

Blest consummation! when no more
Man shall delight in strife,
But join in heart from shore to shore
To ease the ills of life.

THE MANX COURTSHIP;

OR, THE

CURRAGHS OF LEZAYRE.

Down by the Curraghs of Lezayre,
One summer's eve I stray'd
(When free my youthful heart from care)
With my turf-cutting spade;
When on my way, as I did stray
Amongst the rushes green,
I met a maid, neatly array'd,
Her age about sixteen:

Her hair in nature's ringlets flow'd
Upon the evening gale,
Her cheeks with maiden blushes glow'd
Like roses in the vale;
Her homespun gown, of russet-brown,
Became her modest charms,
Its scollop'd sleeves, like folding leaves,
Enwrapt her rosy arms.

I stood awhile, as if entranced,
This sylvan nymph to view,

As blythe and lightly she advanced
Amongst the falling dew;—
Her homely air, her features fair,
Her native manners mild,
Did all unite my love t' excite
For this sweet nature's child.

"How camest thou here alone to rove,"
Said I, "my lovely maid?"
"I'm going homeward to yon grove
Within the woods," she said;
"For near that spot 's my parents' cot,
Which nature doth adorn
With woodbine bowers, and creeping flowers,
Hedged round with blooming thorn."

"Wilt thou not let me see thee home,
My sweet and lovely stranger?
For now to pass the dykes alone
Must sure be fraught with danger;"—
"I'm not afraid," she calmly said,
"I ofttimes wander here
Amongst the hay, at close of day,
When flowers deck the year,

To hear the cuckoo in the glen
Chant forth its vernal note—
The moorcock crowing in the fen—
The wild-duck splash the moat;

But when the hern, amongst the fern,
Begins its nightly scream,
I bend my way, without delay,
Homeward across the stream."

Her frank address, and tender age,
Portray'd her virtuous heart,
And that she 'd not on life's young stage
Yet play'd a lover's part;
But like the rose when first it blows
To sip the morning ray,
Upon the bush, with virgin blush,
She did her charms display.

The glowing west proclaim'd the day
Was drawing near a close,
The evening star, with glist'ning ray,
O'er North Barrule arose—
The loud hoarse roar, from Jurby's shore,
Came wafted on the breeze,
The tame redbreast now sought its rest
Amongst the withy trees.

Each twinkling star the azure sky
Began to decorate,
The moon appear'd to tower on high
In her nocturnal state;—
All nature lay beneath her ray
In calm and tranquil mood,

The ebon rook the moor forsook
To nestle with its brood—

When I, and this sweet Manx young lass,
In pure simplicity,
Sat down upon the verdant grass
With joyful exstacy;
My heart beat high at ev'ry sigh
That heaved her gentle breast,
While we beneath the willow-wreath
Our mutual love confest.

But O, what language can convey
The raptures of my mind,
When first I heard my Jenny say,
With accent sweet and kind,—
"I here forego all else below
That nature can impart
To be through life thy constant wife—
Then take this plighted heart!"

Now arm in arm, in sweet content,
Along the dewy mead
Towards her cot our steps we bent,
Amongst the yellow weed;
While through the night, so clear and bright,
The cottage-rush did gleam,
Throwing a shade along the glade
From its enlivening beam.

The sparrow flutter'd 'mongst the thatch,
The ducks uprose their quack,
Whilst the good dame undid the latch,
And drew the casement back
At our approach towards the porch,
Of jessamine and bay,
And while she smiled, said "O my child,
What 's caused this long delay?

Your father's out this hour or more
In search of you, my dear,
And I've been sitting at the door
Trembling 'tween hope and fear;
I was afraid that you had stray'd
Beyond the dykes alone;
But here comes dad—I am so glad
To see you both at home!"

The good old cotter soon was seen
Close by the chimneyside,
And said, "Dear Jane, where hast thou been?
I've sought thee far and wide;
But come, Jane, say what made thee stay?"
Then Jane with bashful look
Said, "Honour'd dad, I met this lad
Down by Lough-Mallow's brook,

Where I had stray'd with thoughtless gait,
Alone, in musing mood,

Until I saw it was too late
To venture through the wood,
When with a kind and willing mind
He, though he knew me not,
Did take a short road and escort
Me safely to our cot."

"Well, well, who may the stranger be,
That has been thus so kind
As to conduct thee 'cross the lea,
When I could not thee find?
Now, I'll be bail his name is Quaile—
I see it in his face;"—
"As sure as life," exclaim'd the wife,
"He's something to that race."

"Yes, you are right, good dame," said I,
"That is my father's name,
Though not the one that I go by,
Nor like unto the same;
I'm call'd by all, both great and small,
Bill-Hommy-beg-Tom-moar,
Hard by the fair-field of Lezayre,
The *heira** of the Dure."

† "*Tha dera Gee graas than heira beg!*"
Said she, in native tongue,
"For well I knew your mother, Peg,
Long since when we were young;

* The heir of an estate. † May God grant grace to the young heir!

At church or fair none could compare
With her throughout the isle,
She was the pride of all Kirk-Bride,
And round for many a mile;

And well I do remember yet,
That on her wedding-day
She rode a steed as black as jet—
Your father rode a bay;
And many a lad so gaily clad,
And many a lass were there,
So neatly dress'd all in their best,
The wedding-feast to share:

And he who won the race* I think,
If I do not mistake,
Was Johnny-Rob of Ballacrink,
Who broke the wedding-cake
Over the bride as she did glide
In through the festive door,
While all in haste the pieces chased
Along the banquet-floor:

And it was on that very night
That first I dreamt of John,—

* It is a custom in the island, at a wedding, for two young men to run a race on their road home from church, and he who is the winner has the honour to break the wedding-cake into small pieces, and scatter them out of a plate over the head of the bride as she enters the door of the banquet room, which ceremony is supposed to strengthen the dreaming charm.

E'en now it makes my heart grow light
At thoughts of days by-gone!
A neighbouring lass, close by Balfass,
To me the cake did bring,
It was a slice which had been thrice
Pass'd through the wedding-ring:

To place the cake beneath my head,
Repeating o'er the charm,
I backwardly walk'd to my bed,
Not fearing any harm;
The night was dark, and not a spark
Of light was in the room,
Tho' yet, withal, I on the wall
Saw Johnny's figure loom!

I knew him well, and I was blest,
For he of all mankind
Could ease the throbbing of my breast,
And please my youthful mind;
E'er since that day, I well can say,
I ne'er the hour did rue
We join'd our hands in wedlock's bands,
And made my dream out true.

Now we 've been married—John, how long?
I almost now forget;"
"How long?" said he, in accent strong,
"Why twenty years, my Bet;

'Twas at the fair of Kirk-Lezayre,
Just twenty years ago,
I first thee met, my good dame Bet,
Which surely thou must know:

But what care we for time, my dame,
We 're both yet strong and hale,
Thou still at churn and wheel the same,
And I at plough and flail:
There's not a pair in Kirk Lezayre
That 's more content than we,
We 're bless'd with health, and ample wealth—
Our farm, tho' small, is free:

Which all shall come, my Jane, to thee,
When we depart this life,
And e'en before, my girl," said he,
" Shouldst thou become a wife;
For who can say but perhaps you may
Marry a farming-man,
Who may have skill the farm to till,
When I no longer can."

I took this opportunity
The secret to disclose,
And, with all due humility,
I from my seat arose,
And said, " Kind sir, I much revere
Your candid open mind,

With such a friend my life I'd end,
In peace with all mankind.

Would my request, sir, be in vain,
In craving your consent
Unto my union with your Jane,
To crown this day's event?—
For we this night our vows did plight,
Upon the Curragh-green,
To love through life as man and wife,
Let what may intervene."

" Well, well, if such the case, my lad,
Then I must hold my tongue,
But still I cannot say I'm glad,
For Jane is far too young;
Tho' she the reel, and spinning-wheel,
Can use with woman's skill,
But what's still best, 'mongst all the rest,
She does it with good will.

All that is left for me to say,
Since Jane has given consent,
Of what she 's said in haste to-day
I hope she'll ne'er repent:
You both are young, who knows how long
You may be of this mind?
For love possess'd soon cools the breast,
If not of genuine kind."

But such was not our mutual love—
Nor yet our earnest kiss—
For that short hour within the grove
Began a life of bliss;—
Tho' years have fled since we did wed,
Each other's fate to share,
We 've not forgot that blissful spot—
The Curraghs of Lezayre!

Thus pass'd of yore their happy homely life,
The honest cotter and his frugal wife,
The thrifty lass and unassuming swain,
Strangers alike to Care's corroding pain,
Ere foreign trade and luxury began
To dispossess the peasantry of Man
Of their paternal cot and peaceful home,
As strangers on the unfeeling world to roam:
Till then, Contentment cheer'd their humble cot,
And Truth resign'd them to their earthly lot;
Their honest hearts had never learn'd to pant
For the foul draught of artificial want,
But satisfied with what their Mona gave,
They glided from the cradle to the grave.

THE MANX ILVARY.*

When dark December's dismal gloom
Came louring o'er the sky,
And snow-storms gather'd drear around,
And Christmas-feast was nigh,
With all its merry-making time
Of festival and glee,
Beginning with the good old rule,
The Parish *Ilvary;*

When each young rustic with his lass,
Dress'd in their best attire,
Trudged onwards to the Parish Church,
Oft o'er their shoes in mire;
But it was good old Christmas Eve,
At which time of the year
They pass'd each glen and haunted road
Without a spark of fear,

For many a merry-making laugh
Was heard along the moor,
Where meet in groups the neighb'ring swains
Around some cottage door,

* The Service performed in the Church on Christmas Eve in the Island.

Selected by majority
To be the starting post,
Through the good nature of the dame,
And drollery of the host;

And daughters smart perchance they had,
Attractive too and fair,
While none seem'd happier than the dame
To see them, pair and pair,
Start off in all the pride of youth,
As she had done before,
On many a merry Christmas Eve,
From the same cottage door.

The parish bell rung merrily,
Indeed as well it might,
For through the year, save at that time
It never rung at night.
Group after group now fast arrived
From all the parish round,
While mirth and rural jollity
Did 'mongst the whole abound.

Some came across the mountain's side,
Some many weary miles
O'er hills, and lowland marshy fields,
O'er hedges, gates, and stiles;
But it was good old Christmas Eve,
Which comes but once a year,

Hail, rain, or snow, could not detain
Them from th' Ilvary cheer.

The lasses with their gowns tuck'd up,
And strongly pinn'd behind,
Were led by lads along the aisle,
Their landlord's seat to find,*
With candles formed in many a branch,†
The pew t' illuminate,
Fused in the *crescit*‡ by young Peg,
And dipp'd by thrifty Kate.

Along the gallery and nave
Of the old church were seen
Festoons of many a holly-branch,
Relieved with *heben*‖ green.
When in full light the sacred pile
Of many a year appear'd,
And the selected prayers were read,
The pastor homeward steer'd,

Leaving the delegated clerk
To rule the rustic train,

* As but few of the better-thinking sort of the community visited the church on this night, the rustics had free access to each of their landlord's seats.

† It was customary for the females to manufacture candles formed into branches for this occasion.

‡ A piece of a broken iron pot, commonly made use of for melting tallow for the purpose of dipping half-peeled rushes in the grease, and so making "rush-lights" of them.

‖ Ivy.

While each in turn his carol* sang,
Celebrity to gain.
A veteran old, of many years'
Experience in song,
Was still the first each Ilvary
Amongst the rustic throng,

To draw the time-worn sheet from out
His leathern breeches' fob,
In creases deep by dint of years,
But plain enough for Rob,
For he had learnt it all by heart,
As the old saying goes,
But to be thought he could not read
In writing, rhyme or prose,

Was a dishonour to his fame,
Such as he could not brook,
Tho' he had never learn'd the use
Of letters or a book;
But, to be candid, perhaps he might,
If educated well,
Have been a Milton, or a Pope,
A Johnson, or Boswell;

But here we had him as he was,
An honest Manxman bred,

* The custom was for one or two men to stand up at a time, and sing their carols to the audience, after the church service was over; and the church door was kept open until a late hour for that purpose.

With all the marvels yet extant
Well hammer'd in his head;
And with self-consequential air
He'd lean out o'er the pew,
And tune his quav'ring annual note
As if each year 't were new;

While at the end of every verse
The wags around the door
Would loudly cry, with mock applause,
"Well done, Rob-Jack!—encore!"
But he was proof alike to scorn,
And flattery's magic spell,
His own so oft-tried power of song
He knew himself full well,

And that he could his voice command
O'er all their "hems" and "haws,"
Knew where to lay the emphasis
On words, and where to pause;
Yet notwithstanding all his powers,
Few did appreciate
His music or his eloquence,
Saving his old wife, Kate,

Who would, with great pretension too
To St. Cecelia's art,
Chime in to help him through each verse
Towards the latter part.

The next whose customary turn
Was to perform, stood up,—
And being stimulated well
By famed old Nelly's cup,—

Commenced his diatribe against
The cassock and the gown—
Each bishoprick and vicarage
He would that night cry down;*
The curate too came 'neath his lash
As did the easy clerk,
Whom he would view with look askance
At every shrewd remark;

For many a home-directed stroke
Was drawn in metaphor,
In this his yearly tilt against
The episcopal lore.
When those two yearly champions
Had finish'd each his song,
The one so fraught with satire keen,
The other dry and long,

The youthful band the moment hail'd
With many a smiling face,

* This person, whose farm lay next to the glebe-land of the parsonage conceiving that the parson had encroached on his forefather's land-mark, or boundary, composed a Christmas carol from that part of the Apocrypha which treats on the priests of Baal, who robbed the Temple each night of the food that was supposed to be devoured by the Idol, and thus he gave vent to his supposed injured feelings each Christmas eve in song.

For now the time for shutting up
Was drawing on apace,
Now went each joke, and shrewd remark,
Around from pew to pew,
And maids their stock of parched pease
Amongst the rustics threw:

By custom taught for ages back,
The lasses brought their pease,
In pockets full each Ilvary,
The bachelors to tease,
By taking opportunity
When they were least aware,
To throw their pulse artillery
And make the rustics stare.

Now when each chanting candidate
Had done his best to please,*
And lasses tired of the sport
Created by the pease,
They'd all agree with one accord
To take the dreary road,
Re-passing through each haunted glen
Ere all reach'd their abode;

But on that merry-making eve
There is no cause to fear

* There was considerable rivalship on these occasions, in displaying their vocal abilities.

Nor ghosts, nor witches, for 'tis said
They dare not then appear:
Upon each road a half-way house
Was ready to receive
Each courting pair, on their return
From church on Christmas Eve:

A noted one amongst the rest,
The far-famed *Brumish Veg*,*
Well stock'd with home-brew'd beverage
Fresh frothing from the keg;
And blithely on that jovial night
Each toast and jest went round,
And with their rustic merriment
Did *Brumish Veg* resound!

The ale was season'd to the taste
In each full foaming pot,
Not with ground ginger mix'd with spice,
But good black-pepper hot;
And junks of wheaten-flour bread,
So seldom used in Man,
After being toasted on the turf,
Would hiss within the can.

Such was the fare at *Brumish Veg*
As flow'd the mirthful tide,

* A well-known public-house, situate on the banks of the river Corna, in Kirk Maughold.

And many a youthful pair, whose home
Was on the mountain's side,
Sat down to quaff the barleycorn's
Most stimulating juice,
And in their turn another sort
Of songs would introduce

From those which they had sung at church
An hour or two before,
While they would pass the jug about,
Regardless of the score,
Until each lass, persuasively,
Would hint the way was long
They had to go, which would give rise
Unto the parting song.

The parting verse they sang that night
I well remember yet,
It aye reminds me of those scenes
I never can forget;
Though many years have pass'd away
Since last I heard that strain,
Its tones oft o'er my memory steal,
And bring home back again.*

* The "Parting Verse"—

"*Te traa goll thie da goll da lhie*
Te tarn dys traa ny lhiabbagh,
Ta'en stoyl ta foin grainagh shin roin
Te'er signal dooin da gleasagh."

Which may be rendered thus:—

Now we 'll to our homes, lads,
'Tis time to go to bed;
Each rocking-stool a warning gives—
The fire's flame hath fled!

After the parting verse was sung,
And *jough yer dorrys** drank,
And the large Christmas candle had
Within the socket sank,
They of the host of *Brumish Veg*
Then took a parting leave,
And thus the merry rustics all
Closed that auspicious eve.

Each lad would see his lass safe home,
Whose parents would invite
Him in, and sanction his request
To stop with her the night,
While they would go unto their bed
And leave them by themselves,
With a good fire upon the hearth
And plenty on the shelves.

Thus they would pass the happy night,
Still daring not to stride
O'er Hymen's bound'ry, or attempt
What virtue has denied,
Observing the old adage still
Which they were wont to say,—
"To keep the feast strictly preserved
Until the festal day."

* The stirrup-cup.

AN ELEGY
ON
AN ANCIENT BURYING-GROUND,
BEARING NO TRACE OF ITS ORIGIN,
SITUATE NEAR THE SOURCE OF THE RIVER CORNA, ISLE OF MAN.

Across the brow of Snaafield's rugged height
Slowly the mighty king of day retires,
On western regions to transmit his light,
And paint the morning on Columbian spires.

The Vesper twinkles through the twilight haze,
The full-orb'd moon emerges from the east,
The tired heifer from the furrow strays,
Now from the pressure of the yoke releas'd.—

The plover seeks the hospitable bush,
The soaring lark darts downward to its nest,
The mountain-daisy hides its simple blush,
And droops its head upon its dewy breast.—

The playful lambs, the kind maternal ewes,
Behind the hillock to the fold retire,
And leave me here in solitude to muse,
And strike with solemn tone my rustic lyre.

Beneath these heath-clad time-respected mounds,
The sacred dust of Mona's ancient race
Securely lies within the narrow bounds,
Till time dissolves in never-ending space.

Their obscure annals the recording page
Unravels not,—nor does tradition say
What did their mental properties engage
During their earthly transitory stay:

Tho' here, perhaps, some warlike Manxmen lie,
Who 've dipp'd their sandals in Norwegian gore,
Ere they would with proud Goddard's* yoke comply,
When he invaded peaceful Mona's shore:

A Manx Lycurgus may have hidden here
A life devoted to his Island's cause—
Or rests some ancient Prince, to Mona dear,
Who erst, at Tinwal Court, upheld her laws.

But awful silence o'er their gloomy cell
Outspreads its dark impenetrable pall,
In dread oblivion evermore to dwell,
Which is in truth the common lot of all:

* This Prince, the son of Harold the Black of Iceland, being defeated in the Norwegian army at Stamford, by Harold, son of Earl Goodwin, A.D. 1065, fled for protection to the Isle of Man, where he was kindly entertained by the people. After he had made himself acquainted with the localities of the Island he returned to his native land, and raised a great fleet to invade the Island. He was repulsed twice, but carried it on the third attempt by stratagem.—*Sacheverell's Account of the Isle of Man*, 1702.

For sculptured tombs of adamantine rock,
And polish'd marble monumental urns,
Shall crumble 'neath the unresisted shock
When Fate Time's mighty empire overturns!

Altho' the process may appear but slow,
Compared with mortals' momentary flight
Through this terrestial mystery below,—
Like yon bright meteor darting thro' the night,—

Yet, the short record of a thousand years
Will but appear as yesterday that's past,
When the seraphic messenger appears
And with his trump proclaims the final blast!

Then sleep in peace, my honour'd, ancient race,
Your earthly cares are now for ever fled,—
Leaving behind no mark for man to trace
Your faults, or virtues, to your lowly bed:

And tho' no sculpture decorates your tomb,
Nature shall dress, at each returning spring,
Your lonely mansion with the heather-bloom,
While mountain larks around your shrine shall sing!

And when no more the rays of summer smile,
But winter-storms from the bleak north emerge,
And wrap in gloomy vest your native Isle—
The osier reeds shall sigh your fun'ral dirge.

MY NATIVE ISLE.

My dear loved Isle! thy rocky shores
Still linger on my view,
Though twenty years have told their tale
Since last I sigh'd adieu
Unto thy heather-mantled hills,
Where stray'd I when a child,
And chased the partridge 'mongst the heath,
Or pluck'd the flowers wild.

Thy vast gigantic Snaafield's height,
Which in thy centre stands,
Whose towering rugged barren crest
One general view commands
Of England's northern, western coast,
And Scotland's southern Mull,
While old Beaumaris' head in Wales
Displays its form in full;

Vast Arran too, in Erin's isle,
Amid the haze is seen,
While rolls St. George's Channel-flood
In foaming waves between—

Thy snow-capt hills I still behold
In memory's early shade,
And all the peaceful rural joys
That 'mongst thy rocks pervade:

All—all thy charms across me steal,
And twine around my heart,
And oft a momentary bliss
'Mongst cares of life impart—
My dear loved isle, thy rocky shores
Still linger on my view,
Though twenty years have told their tale
Since last I sigh'd adieu!

THE MANXMAN'S FAREWELL.

A Maranagh doise—from the *clen* I was *trogit*,*
Close by the foot of the bridge of Cornay,
Whose keystone was fix'd in the year I was *rugit*,†
Three miles and a half from the town of Ramsey:
In this rural spot, at the foot of the mountain,
I pass'd the gay morn of my life's chequer'd day,
Alike when December in ice bound each fountain,
Or flowers sprung forth at the mild breath of May.

To me seem'd my cot and the green fields around it
The whole of vast Nature's dominion below,
Tho' oft the blue ether that archingly bound it
Caused many conjectures its nature to know;
In a circle of joy each moment pass'd daily,
As freely I roved the green meadows or *Carn*,‡
And sang in my own native language so gaily,
The "*Keery fo-naughty*," or "*Molacarane*."||

But, ah! cruel Fate in her freak had design'd me
To traverse the regions of old mother earth,

* A true Manxman bred from the cradle. † Born.
‡ The name of a field. || Two popular songs in the Manx language.

And leave my dear *Mannin* with sorrow behind me,
The home of my fathers—the land of my birth!
Full well I remember that day yet with sorrow,
When first from my own *Mannin veen* I did stray,
And when I beheld her high cliffs on the morrow
Fast sinking below the blue waves far away,

I thought on my parents who fondly caress'd me,
And soothed all my sorrows in childhood's fond years,
And love unrequited, that pang which distress'd me
And forced me away from my island in tears:
What language can picture my heartfelt emotion,
As flew the gay barque o'er the white-foaming swell,
When I sigh'd to the breeze in my silent devotion—
"My *Mannin*, my own *Mannin veen*, fare-thee-well!"

THE OLD ASPEN-TREE.

NEAR the old bridge's arching span,
Where I in innocence began
 My life's mysterious dream,
There stands an aged aspen-tree,
With branches moving gracefully
 O'er Corna's gliding stream;
And may it still by the old mill
 For many a season stand,
For it was planted when a twig
 By my grandfather's hand.

My countrymen and brother Manx,
Of all societies and ranks,
 From Spanish-head to Air,
I would implore your clemency
Towards my grandsire's favourite tree,
 And for his sake it spare;
That it may still the flaxen mill
 Both shelter and adorn,
As it was wont to do of yore,
 Long, long ere I was born.

Whoever now beneath its shade
May carry on the old mill's trade,
 I pray him to relax
His pond'rous arm from the old tree,
Which was in youth so dear to me,
 And spare it from the axe :
O, let it still o'er the old mill
 Its quivering foliage shake,
And if the bard a boon may crave,
 O spare it for *his* sake!

AN ELEGY ON THE OLD ASPEN-TREE.

Alas! my fond Muse, how camest thou to linger
So long 'neath the shadow of Time's fleeting wing,
Ere thou drew o'er thy lyre thy magical finger,
Or gently reverb'rated memory's string?

For now the old aspen-tree towers no longer
O'er th' old flaxen mill, or the clear gliding stream,
Tho' my wish to have saved it could not have been stronger,
To remind me once more of my childhood's lost dream.

Should Fate e'er command me again to revisit
That spot which still lingers on memory's view,
What will be my feelings when doom'd thus to miss it,
And perhaps find a sapling sprung up in its lieu—

And the green fertile bank, which so long it had shaded
From the summer's noon rays, unshelter'd and bare,

And those cowslips and daisies, all wither'd and faded
Which grew 'neath its shadow so blooming and fair!

Farewell to the tree and its beauty for ever,
No more 'neath its shade shall my fancy rove free,
For the saw, or the axe, from the bank of the river
Hath sever'd the grasp of the old aspen-tree!

MORAL.

The fate of the aspen but too much resembles
The flourish of man in this world from his birth,
Awhile in the pride of his station he lingers,
Death strikes, and his glory is hurl'd to the earth!

THE BARD'S LAMENTATION.

REMOTE and unfriended on life's troubled ocean,
The lone bard of Mannin in sorrow reclines,
And midst the loud tumult of foreign commotion,
O'er the harp at his lonely condition repines,

And sighs for the joys of his own native island,
And Corna the seat of his forefathers' race,
Whose lowland green meadows, and heather-clad highland,
Nor time, nor affliction, can ever efface

From the mem'ry of him whose heart still grows fonder
As the years of his exile reluctantly roll,
For absence but seems to imprint them the stronger
With time-baffling traces on memory's scroll.

Ah, Mannin! dear Mannin! how can I neglect thee?
My unroaming heart closely clings to thy shore,
And while it yet throbs I shall never forget thee,
Tho' I should behold thee, my Mannin, no more.

As clings the young infant, with fondling caresses,
Unto the glad mother to gaze on her smile—
So does my fond heart, midst the world's sad distresses,
Cling close to the rocks of my dear native isle!

As pines the wild hart, on Syria's parch'd mountains,
The murmuring streamlet's clear waters to see—
Or the green myrtle groves that shade the cool fountains—
So pine I in absence, my Mannin, for thee!

TO E. M. GAWNE, ESQ.

KENTRAUGH, KIRK-CHRIST-RUSHEN, ISLE OF MAN.

Most honour'd Sir, a Manxman—in whose breast
Burns the bright spark of patriotic flame,
Unquench'd by time, but with increasing zest
Will urge him on to sing of Mona's fame
In all the pure simplicity of style
Adapted to the peasants of his isle—

Would with all due humility request
Your kind consent to be the Muse's friend,
And raise an emulation in her breast
By graciously a kindly ear to lend,
While, in her homely way, she would rehearse
Her native powers in her rustic verse:

And should her claims to poesy be not such
As to obtain your honour's full applause,
Perhaps your heart may yield to nature's touch,
For she has drawn her source from nature's laws,
Unaided by the skill of classic art,
She simply sings the dictates of the heart.

I first began, while yet in early age,
As carelessly I roved the mountain-side,
To glean unconsciously from nature's page
The rudiments in which I now confide
As my director, and my leading star
Through life's dark vale, and science' field afar,

Where countless spheres harmoniously unite
In awful grandeur to transmit their rays,
Forth to proclaim, in silent order bright,
To erring man their mighty Maker's praise,
Declaring still, by each reflected beam,
Jehovah's name, Omnipotent—Supreme!

And Truth sublime, to learn and know was mine,—
And practice too, at my paternal home,—
Which, like the magnet the meridian line,
Directs my thoughts where'er on earth I roam—
Tho' oft by worldly maxims' artful force
It is diverted from its wonted course,—

And my own erring thoughts full oft would draw
Their influence from fair Virtue's path apart,
Were it not for that truthful heavenly law
That was establish'd in my youthful heart,
And nurtur'd 'neath a parent's watchful eye,
Whose care was to prepare me for the sky.

Inured to labour in the furrow'd field,
I, with the lark, did hail the purple east,

The culturing plough with nervous strength to
wield,
Or dole the fodder to the craving beast,
Or, free as is the circumbient air,
I'd rove the craggy glens, devoid of care.—

Such was my training in my childhood's days,
Ere yet I thought of straying from my home,
To which, e'en now, my memory conveys
My happy thoughts, tho' doom'd by fate to
roam,
A lonely exile from my Mona's shore,
In foreign climes for twenty years and more.

Fain would I now return, once more to view
The happy spot that give my being birth,
And spend life's evening 'mongst those happy few,
The dearest to my heart of all on earth !
When cheerfully to sing my Mona's praise
Would be the theme of my declining days.

Free from all foreign artificial strife,
I'd rove my native mountains once again,
And turn me from all scenes of pamper'd life,
Whose glittering moments end in years of pain,
When worldly wiles no longer satisfy,
And conscience whispers "Mortal, thou must die!"

Far, far from such allurements I would stray,
To where my toil sufficient would bestow

To satisfy the cravings of each day,
While doom'd to tread this mortal vale below,
Tho' such a spot can scarcely now be found
Throughout the great organic earthly round.

But next to such, my Mona seems *that* part
Of all the earth to answer my desire,
Her sons, each with a free and honest heart,
Would in declining age my muse inspire
With philanthropic zeal towards mankind,
That soothing solace to the human mind.

I've sail'd beneath the flag of England's fame
These twenty years to many a foreign shore,
And now my crazy hulk, shatter'd and lame,
Lies up in hope to brave the storm no more—
Trusting that fortune yet may deign to smile,
And bear me to my long-loved native isle.

On my return to England's happy ground,
Fate had decreed to set me once more free,—
For Esculapian skill my timbers found
Unfit for future services at sea,—
Granting me forty pounds and five a year
Down life, close-haul'd, upon the wind to steer,

With my depending family in tow,—
And adverse breakers roaring on my lee,—
While o'er the shoals of life I touch and go,
Endeavouring to weather penury,

Whose threat'ning storm forewarns me to beware
Of its approach, with more than prudent care.

And my best friends are something like myself—
From wear and tear, and Ministerial fate,—
Laid up to rust on the retired shelf,
While changing councils guide th' affairs of State;
Tho' willing, thus unable to perform
Their part to shield me from th' impending storm.

TO
A DISTINGUISHED FRIEND.

Uncelebrated and unknown to fame,
A Manxman's rustic muse with homage pays
Unto her noble friend's respected name
Her grateful meed of tributary praise.
He was the first to take me by the hand,
When science dawn'd on my untutor'd mind,
And lead me on to take my humble stand
Amongst my fellows of the self-taught kind.
When first he saw the genial plant* spring forth
From Nature's rude unmeliorated soil,
With a peculiar care he watch'd its growth,
Ere it became to cruel men a spoil,
And with a noble stimulating hand
Was ready still the bud to cultivate,
Which, while protected 'neath his own command,
Gave ample proof to brave the storms of fate;
But oh! full soon cold Envy's bitter blast
Pour'd forth its fury o'er the tender bloom,
While Malice, in its darkest shade, o'ercast
Its native source with dire insidious gloom,
And ever-moving Time's eventful stride—
Whose stern command all nature must obey—

* In allusion to a scientific discovery by the author.

Removed its watchful patron from its side,
And left it to the sordid kind a prey;
And soon the helpless stem, blighted and bare,
Was left deprived of what fair Nature gave
To stem the current of a world of care,
And bleak tempestuous penury to brave,
While those who've robb'd it of its mental fruit,
And caused the stimulating sap to freeze,
Within the channels of a false repute
Enjoy the sunshine of a life of ease.
But stop, my muse, and let not rancour rage
Amongst thy wonted amicable theme,
For stern realities the truth presage
That this, their life, as well as mine's a dream,
Which soon shall vanish in oblivious gloom,
Beyond the reach and knowledge of mankind,
Within the dark embraces of the tomb,
And leave this world with all its dross behind.
Then why should I thus mourn my hapless fate,
Since Nature's counsel no distinction draws
'Twixt man and man, whate'er may be his state,
But all are subject to her common laws?
Though hard the grasp of stern adversity,
It teaches me my erring self to know;
I envy not this world's prosperity,
Which, when abused, oft leads to scenes of woe.
Full soon shall time, with pulverising power,
Amalgamate our animated clay
With kindred earth, for reptiles to devour,
And sweep for ever all our toil away.

Yet, while the circling crimson flood shall flow
Within the secret channels of this heart,
And while with life this throbbing breast shall glow,
I'll try my skill in the poetic art
To tune the praises of my noble friend,
On Nature's lyre, with a most grateful strain,
As through this life I journey to the end,
Though I should never see his face again.

TO

AN HONOURED FRIEND.

PARDON the imprudence of my rustic muse,
Most honour'd Sir, while she would thus intrude
Upon your time, her feelings to diffuse
In all th' uncouthness of a rough prelude—
To what she may hereafter bring to light
When tempted to essay a loftier flight.

She was the sweet companion of my youth,
Ere time had stamp'd its index on my brow;
Nurtur'd together in the path of truth,
We sang of nature at the cult'ring plough
In the pure accents of my native Manx,
In Mona's Isle, on Corna's fertile banks.

And now in after-life thus sore opprest,
As friendless and neglectedly I stray,
She 's come to offer solace to my breast,
And cheer me down my life's sequester'd way
With her endearing pictures of the past,
Ere cares of life my youthful brow o'ercast.

My charts, and compass, and my sextant too
Lie mouldering upon my cabin shelf,

Tho' their adjustments I can warrant true,
For they were manufactur'd by myself
On Nature's plan of never-erring truth,
Carefully studied from my early youth.

As here I drift before the storm of fate,
Without an anchor, and my rudder gone,
And all my timbers in a shatter'd state,
Unable thus my barque to steer or cunn,
While, on my lee, life's adverse breakers roar
O'er the shoals of penury's iron shore,

And dead to windward on my weather beam
Red streaks of malice glare amid the gloom
Of low'ring clouds,—which darker to me seem,
Far darker than the regions of the tomb,—
And my already over-power'd barque
For their fierce fury lies a helpless mark!

But here my muse would soar beyond my will,
And write her subject with a gall-dipt pen,
And in her rhyming way some volumes fill
On the oppression of my fellow men;
But Prudence whispers, "Honest man, beware,
And shun with caution their entangling snare."

Nor is it my intention, honour'd Sir,
To prostitute my honest rustic muse,
Or to the painful subject to recur,
Which would but tend with rancour to confuse

Her honest self-taught verse, and homely theme
Of country treats, and rustic life's young dream.

Far better subjects occupy my strain,
Such as are worthy of my home-made lyre:
Amongst my native rocks I would again
Chant forth the rhapsodies of nature's fire,
And down the stream of life's declining years
Would glide devoid of artificial fears,

And all the heart-felt pangs that do attend
Th' aspiring breast to rise to honest fame,
With humble worth my best and only friend,
And long untarnish'd character my claim,—
Tho' such ingredients in these latter days
Oft meet neglect, and not their meed of praise.

But ere I take my leave, to ask no more
My friends to give my batter'd barque a tow,
To bear up for my long-lost Mona's shore,
And further supplications to forego,
With all my best exertions come to naught—
The once fair field with blighted prospects fraught,

I would, with heartfelt throes of gratitude,
Most honour'd Sir, my warmest thanks express
For all your favours, ere I here conclude
This my uncouth poetical address;
And though the storm may still around me roar,
I will not trespass on your kindness more.

THE MYSTERIES OF HUMAN LIFE.

Mysterious is the soul of man,
Deep veil'd in dark obscurity,
Whose mortal course is but a span—
A being of eternity!

Where is thy seat, immortal soul,
Within this earthly frame of mine—
Art thou diffus'd throughout the whole,
Or does a part thy power enshrine?

This union's secret, man in vain
With searching mind seeks to explore,
And if the future, joy or pain
Will yield from out its hidden store.

But better far to hide from man
That which would mar his present joy,
His fate if he could only scan
Might all his happiness destroy.

Then be resign'd to what thou art,
And seek not of thy life to know
More than thy Maker doth impart
To suit thy being here below.

THE MEDWAY'S BANKS.

On Medway's banks, when gaily drest
In all their flow'ry hue,
I clasp'd my Mary to my breast,
And bade my cares adieu.

I found her in a homely cot,
Within a woodland vale,
Contented with her humble lot,
Though flower of the dale.

Her youthful charms, her maiden blush,
Her modest air serene,
Like the sweet primrose 'neath the bush,
Adorn'd the rural scene.

Or like the daisy's homely form,
Whose cheerful smile doth greet
Alike the piercing winter's storm,
And summer's noontide heat.

When in a rural vale in Kent,
I found this lovely flower,
My mind at once was fully bent
To use my utmost power

Soon to transplant her in my heart,
To be my constant care,
And not till death from her to part,
But all her beauties share.

When first my Mary did consent
To be my youthful bride,
My inmost thoughts could not invent
Another wish beside.

The morn was fair, the fields looked gay,
No cloud skimm'd o'er the sky,
When I and Mary bent our way
To bind the nuptial tie.

After a parent's fervent prayer
To bless our bridal morn,
We to the village did repair,
Through fields of ripening corn,

Towards the church, whose bended roof,
And weather-beaten tower,
Proclaimed forth an ample proof
Of Time's destroying power.

'Twas in this church of ancient date,
Whilst young Hope's pulse beat high,
That we did join our earthly fate
To love until we die!

THE ABSENT LOVER.

Forbear, sweet songsters of the grove,
To swell your warbling throats,
Ye mind me of my absent love
By these familiar notes
Ye used to chant, when here we stray'd
Remote from human eye,
When solar rays began to fade
Amid the evening sky;
And sigh'd the artless tale of love
Beneath the willow-shade,
While coo'd Love's emblematic dove
Within the woodland-glade;
But now no more to me your lay
A solace can impart,
While strays that object far away
That 's dearest to my heart,
In famed Italia's sunny clime,
Where love's young cupids dwell
Amongst the myrtle and the lime,
As ancient poets tell;
Yet even there, 'mongst myrtle bowers,
Where Love in all her charms,

Enwreath'd in Oriental flowers,
 Invites him to her arms,
I'll trust him with this plighted heart,
 He never false can prove
Who pledged his vows, e'er we did part,
 His Betsy still to love.
Could I, sweet plaintive bird,* like thee,
 When past the genial spring,
My aeriel course o'er land and sea
 Perform on pliant wing,
I'd take my unresisted flight
 Unto my lover's breast,
And there with ever-new delight
 Would on his bosom rest;
But such, sweet bird, is not my fate,
 Such bliss I must resign,
And mourn the absence of my mate
 In strains resembling thine,
Until the sluggish wheels of time
 Revolve another year,
And bear him to his native clime,
 And me my all that's dear:—
Blow soft, ye oriental gales,
 Ye billows, cease to foam,
Let gentle zephyrs fan the sails
 That waft my lover home!

* The Nightingale.

THE BEREFT MOTHER.*

In vain the blooming flowers spring
To variegate the vernal year,
In vain the feather'd warblers sing
My drooping spirit now to cheer—
For all my earthly joys are fled—
My babe, my tender babe, is dead.

Those bright blue eyes, whose glist'ning ray
Have ofttimes soothed my cares to rest—
That smile, which did thy joy convey
When sweetly play'dst thou on my breast—
I still upon my sleepless bed
Behold thee, babe, though thou art dead!

My tear-fraught fount still, still will flow
Till weariness my eyelids close,
And even *then* my heartfelt woe
Disturbs my feverish, transient doze—
Again my copious tears I shed
For thee, my tender babe, that 's dead.

* Written on the death of the Author's youngest child by accident in 1842.

The world 's to me a wilderness,
And I a lonely pilgrim there,
Its joys I wish not to possess,
Nor of its fleeting bliss to share;
My mind towards the tomb is led
To mourn my infant's fate that 's dead.

All earthly ties I would resign,
And lay me down, my child, with thee,
Should it but please the will divine
That thou my solace still might be—
Death's gloomy vale I'd cease to dread,
To be with thee, my babe, that 's dead.

When on dark Jordan's banks I stand—
Waiting the summons to repair
To great Emanuel's promis'd land—
Will thy sweet spirit meet me there?
Yes—in such hope death's gloom I'll tread
To join thee 'mongst the happy dead!

THE MANX EXILE.

PEACE be to Mona's happy isle!
While I in foreign climates roam,
Oft do thy charms my cares beguile,
My native land—my island home!
To thee my thoughts will oft return,
Conversing with the sacred dead,
Whilst for the lost one still I mourn*
Who sleeps in peace near Maughold's head.

How strong is Nature's sacred tie
That binds me closely to thy shore—
How pensively I often sigh,
"Ah, shall I ever see thee more?"—
In fancy's dreams I often see
The happy spot that gave me birth,
The humble vale, how dear to me,
It is the sweetest spot on earth!

The flow'ry banks of Corna's stream
Are still to me a favour'd spot,

* The author's mother.

There first was form'd my life's young dream,
And on them stands my native cot;
In summer's pride I've stray'd along,
When flowers deck'd the river side,
Chanting a rural, native song,
As by the crystal stream did glide.

All then was peace and happiness,
My mind was free from ev'ry care,
No bitter pangs rose to distress
My heart, which since has had its share
In many a keen and galling pain,
Struggling with worldly misery,
Yet still, tho' toss'd on life's rough main,
I 've thought, my dearest isle, of thee.

It yet may be my happy lot,
When cease my toils and earthly care,
To haste to thee, my native spot,
Thy rural peace at last to share;
There with my kind endearing wife,
And all our little happy train,
I would resign a sailor's life
To till my Mona's soil again!

MY MARY, WILT THOU GO WITH ME?

My Mary, wilt thou go with me
To my sweet Mona's Isle,
Where thou my native cot shalt see
In humble rural style?
Upon a green, near Corna's stream,
Thou 'lt find the peaceful spot,
Close by a rill that turns a mill,
My old sire's portion'd lot.

I 'll show thee where I 've ofttimes play'd,
And pluck'd the primrose sweet,
Beneath an aged elder's shade,
My childhood's calm retreat—
Where in the spring the small birds sing,
And hums the busy bee,
While more remote the cuckoo's note
Sounds sweetly o'er the lea,

Denoting that the time is near
When hawthorn trees shall bloom,
And that in flow'r shall soon appear
The clust'ring yellow broom:
And where the trout unto the spout
Of the old flaxen mill

I did decoy, when but a boy,
And caught them at my will.

I 'll take thee to the moorland side,
Where the blooming heather,
And mountain-thyme, in nature's pride,
Blend their sweet scents together;
There thou shalt see the mountain bee
Extract the liquid juice,
For winter's store when fields no more
His sweet'ning food produce.

We 'll then ascend the vast Barrule,
Where, from its russet brow,
Thou 'lt see where I learnt nature's school,
Holding my father's plough
In boyhood state, till doom'd by fate
I cross'd the raging sea
To England's ground, for fame renown'd,
And fix'd my love on thee!

Then come with me to Mona's Isle,
It is a rural scene,
I 'm sure it will life's cares beguile
As if they ne'er had been;
For scenes like these, I'm sure will please
Thy sympathetic breast,
Then come with me, my love, and see
The spot that I love best.

THE FIRST FAREWELL.

This summons now I must obey,
I 'm at my country's call,
No longer with thee can I stay,
My life, my love, my all!
Yet while I brave
The stormy wave
My thoughts shall be of thee,
May Heaven above
Protect thee, love,
While I am far at sea!

No friend on earth have I but thee,
Sweet partner of my care!
Thy smile is more than all to me—
Thy frown I never share:
That tender heart
Can ne'er impart
A pang unto this breast—
Thou art my joy,
Without alloy,
And solace when distress'd.

My calling is to face the foe,
And spread old Britain's fame,

Then wilt thou not, love, let me go
To raise my humble name?
For British laws
And Freedom's cause
I 'll brave the stormy main,
And be as bold
As tars of old,
And England's rights maintain.

While float the British hearts of oak,
That bear extensive sway,
I will not from the cause revoke,
But cheer'ly will obey,
And raise the flag
That stood the fag
Of mighty wars of yore,
When British tars,
Midst wounds and scars,
Did free old England's shore.

Tho' George's tars are now grown old,
As Time will have his sway,
In mighty deeds they oft have told
The glory of their day;
And still are found
On England's ground
Young tars as brave as they,
Who when call'd forth
Will shew their worth,
And tyrants' power dismay.

Now comes the part that tries the heart,
Its test mine scarce can stand,
Which is, that I from thee must part,
And my sweet cherub-band;—
How can I bear
That parting tear,
And that expressive sigh?
Love! do not mourn—
I shall return—
My life—my love—good bye!

THE SECOND FAREWELL.

ONCE more, my Mary, I must go,
And face the stormy wave,
To quell Britannia's haughty foe
I would all dangers brave:
But ere I venture on the deep
Let us our cares beguile—
Come hither, love, and do not weep,
But cheer me with thy smile.

It oft within our nuptial years
Has been our lot to part,
Yet still the oft'ner it appears
The fonder grows the heart!
Though keen the pang we feel, my love,
When we express farewell,
'Tis mix'd with sympathies that prove
Much more than tongue can tell.

Then let this sympathetic glow
That flows within our breast,
Be the sweet solace of our woe
When we are thus oppress'd;
Then cease, my love, to sigh and mourn,
I hope 't will not be long
Ere I again to thee return,
To cheer thee with my song.

TO MR. JOHN TRUSS, R.N.

I've thought, my good old trusty friend,
Just now as I have time,
To thee from Malta's rock to send
A verse or two in rhyme;
And though the feet may not well meet
To form good verse or measure,
In them thou'lt find my very mind
Display'd, dear Tom, with pleasure.

I trust thou art in perfect health,
As well's thy constant Jane,
(Without its balm all earthly wealth,
Or pleasures, are but vain,)
And with good will, I wish thee still
Through life, without alloy
Of worldly care, an ample share
Of happiness and joy.

May thou and Jenny, hand in hand,
Your offspring by your side,

Adown life's stream, 'neath Heaven's command,
With resignation glide ;
And may you see your progeny
To generations rise,
And round you shine, in life's decline,
To cheer your aged eyes.

And when your earthly journey's o'er,
And all your troubles past,
May you arrive at that blest shore
Where virtue rests at last
From cares of life, and worldly strife,
Which never cease below,
For while we're here, we still must share
Our part of earthly woe.

And as for me, my trusty friend,
I'm born to nought but care,
Though what high Heaven behoves to send
God gives me strength to bear;
And when mankind perplex my mind,
As through this life I roam,
I find relief, amidst my grief,
In Mary, thee, and home.

And thou hast got thy Jenny, too,
To cheer thee on the road
Along this life's rough journey through,
And share thy care-fraught load :

Then let not care, with such a pair,
E'er enter in our breast,
But let our toast be still to boast
Of wives the very best!

If there's a blessing here below
To smooth man's chequer'd life,
And make his heart with pleasure glow,
It is a virtuous wife;—
Then from my gill my glass I'll fill,
And give the favourite toast—
"Come, while we drink, still may we think
Of those we love the most!"

THE FALSE ONE.

FAREWELL, thou false one!—now for ever—
These lines our last farewell shall tell,
Though once I thought I ne'er could sever
From that false heart I loved too well;—
Remember that our vows were plighted,
Hallow'd by the Powers above,
That our young hearts should be united
For ever in the bonds of love.

I thought my prize beyond all treasure,
When thou didst promise to be mine
My fond heart leapt with joy and pleasure,
Not dreaming once how false was thine:
My youthful love on thee I squander'd—
Thou canst not *now* that love restore;
Thro' thee full many a clime I've wander'd
Since last I left my Mona's shore.

When thou prov'dst false, and I was slighted,
I from my native isle did roam,
And on the world became benighted,
Without a friend—without a home!

Yet, still I could not cease to love thee—
Thou hadst my heart within thy breast—
No other could I place above thee,
Though thou wert false—I loved thee best!

I strove, deceiver, to forget thee
Through life's ever varying scene,
Yet still thy image did beset me
Without an interval between;
Oft when on ocean's briny billow
As tempests dire swept o'er the sea,
And duty o'er, I've sought my pillow,
There not to rest—but think of thee!

Yet, Lady, while I thus address thee,
Calling to mind those scenes gone by,
Let not my humble lay distress thee,
But mayst thou be as blest as I!—
Now I can smile, yet cease to love thee—
Once loved more than tongue can tell—
Embracing one that's far above thee,
False one—for ever fare-thee-well!

A SUMMER-EVENING'S STROLL.

My Mary, sit thee down by me,
And I will sing a song of love
Beneath the hawthorn's shady tree,
In this sequester'd, silent grove;
Remote from worldly cares and strife
I'll sit me down and tune my lay
To thee, my ever-soothing wife,
As 'mongst the grass our children play:

And as they pluck the cowslip sweet,
Or chase the butterfly or bee,
I will my melodies repeat,
My Mary, dear,—in praise of thee!
And all my tuneful powers devote
To please thee, love, though I should fail
In making each vibrating note
Flow sweetly on the evening gale.

Were I the monarch of this earth,
Possessing all within its round,
Or of a high and noble birth,
Or for glorious deeds renown'd,—

My Mary still my queen should be,
My lady, or my heroine,
For who could I exchange for thee,
My sweet, my lovely nymph divine!

And though our portion be but small
Of what the worldly folk call wealth,
That little sum is more than all
To us, with happiness and health;
We envy not the rich and great,
Moving within their gorgeous sphere,
But blest within our humble state
We taste those joys to *us* so dear!

The riches which mankind deceive
Destroy the dictates of the mind,
Oft causing many to believe
That gold can make them more refined;
But ours is far the happier lot,
No riches have we to destroy
The humble blessings of our cot,
Which we, content, in peace enjoy.

To me, my Mary, worldly life
Would be a burden fraught with care,
Were not those blessings round me rife,
And *thee*—who 'rt ready aye to share
My sorrow or my happiness,
Alternately as Providence

Still in His wisdom lays the stress
On each frail human circumstance.

Thou in life's darkness shinest as bright,—
E'en as the brilliant evening star
Sheds lustre o'er the shades of night,
When solar rays are drawn afar,—
Dispelling all that might give pain
Unto this anxious breast of mine,
By that sweet smile which first did gain
And join'd this heart, my love, to thine!—

Or,—like a solitary rose
Within the desert's barren ground,
That 'mongst the thorns and briars grows,
Thou cheer'st the gloom that hangs around
The bitter moments of this life,
When cares or woe possess the mind;—
Ah, who would be without a wife
Were all the sex, like thee, so kind?

Our tender offspring, as they play,
Remind us of what *we* have been,
Ere care began to take its sway
In marring life's most pleasing scene!
Then let us not destroy their mirth,
While innocently they employ
Their happiest moments here on earth,
But rather join them in their joy.

We'll think ourselves in youth again
 By mingling in their childish play,
While I shall choose a lively strain,
 And my best vocal powers essay
To help my simple rural lyre,
 As on the happy moments glide,—
Our young-ones round us to inspire
 Our hearts with pure parental pride.

But ah, too soon, alas! they 'll know
 That their young joy is but a glance
That briefly shines—ere yet their woe
 Shall shade the scene as years advance;
But, love, we'll ne'er forget that still
 To bring them up to us is given,
And we must each our part fulfil
 In training their young minds for heaven!

THE LAMENT OF THE OLD HORSE'S GHOST.

Ye horses all, who may pass by
This spot where rest my bones,
Behold my head, which once was high,
Now bleaching 'mongst these stones.

I was a horse of note and fame
Some thirty years ago,
Before the king of terrors came
And laid me thus full low.

My portion was, when but a foal,
To be a farmer's pet,
My skin as sleek as any mole,
My limbs well form'd and set:

My colour of the chestnut hue,
With milk-white mane and tail,
Made me the favourite as I grew
Of all the neighbouring vale.

When I grew up to be a horse,
And fit to take the yoke,
I scornfully my tail would toss,
And snorted to be broke

Into the low-life plodding way
Of dragging plough or cart;
But my young master to convey
To country fair or mart

Was an employment to my will
And worthy of my merit,
And such I did for years fulfil
With well-earn'd fame and credit.

Oft at Michaelmas fair, at eve,
When lads were fresh and mellow,
Throughout the north the race t' achieve
There was not found my fellow.

When coming homewards, late at night,
From Douglas-fair, or Peel's,*
My master trusted to my flight
And mettle of my heels.

Whene'er we met a fairy crowd,
In glens upon our way,
I snorted as he sang aloud
To keep the elves at bay;

And often, ere I sought my bed
Amongst the dewy grass,
He'd throw the bridle o'er my head
To bear him to his lass.

* Two popular fairs.

Not that I wish myself to praise,—
Oft my nocturnal race
Might well be term'd, to use the phrase,
A minor steeple chase;

No hedges, ditches, gates, or stiles,
Could my fleet course resist,
To bear him there, some fifteen miles,
And homeward when he list:

But he was aye a master kind
To me up from my youth,
Such as I could not elsewhere find,
For time unfolds that truth.

But woe to me, my master fail'd,
With sad misfortunes rife,
Which ever after I bewail'd
As long as I had life.

His little farm and all his gear,
And I amongst the rest,
His famed pet-horse for many a year,
Came under the arrest;

A price was laid upon my head,
Or rather on my back,
And I was sold to "Jem the Red,"
To be a carrier's hack,

To drag his cart, o'er hill and dale,
From town to town each day,
Which made me my sad fate bewail,
And chide grim death's delay;

For life was but a grievous load
To me in such a state,
To be so hack'd upon the road
At morning, noon, and late.

Oft when in Douglas, late at night,
In winter's piercing blast,
While Jemmy quaff'd his heart's delight,
And was to start the last,

I've stood at the Black Lion door,
Whilst he would drink and rail,
And heartily wish'd that Mrs. Moore
Would cease to draw her ale;

For when he got with drunken sots
Hours like moments flew,
So long as mother Moore the pots
On future prospects drew.

When at his will I'd take the road,
Shivering with the cold,
The galling whip my back would goad,—
My limbs both stiff and old.

O judge, ye horses in whose breast
A spark of pity glows,
How I, who was in youth caress'd,
Could thus put up with blows,

And kicks, and cuffs, and usuage hard
In my declining day,
While scantily I often fared
On grains and mouldy hay.

O what would not I then have given
E'en for the wisps of straw,
Which round the old farm-yard were driven,
To fill my craving maw!

My stable too was cold and damp,
From openings in the roof,
Which made me oft my legs to stamp,
And rub them with my hoof

To warm my old stagnated blood
Chill'd by each watery track,
Which gather'd round me as I stood
Before an empty rack.

But Death at last, my only friend,
Relieved me from my woe,
And put a welcome final end
To all my wrongs below.

Now I am past the reach of man,
No more his hand shall gripe
My mouth with iron bit, nor can
He give me now a stripe.—

Ye horses all, who may pass by
This spot where rest my bones,
Behold my head, which once was high,
Now bleaching 'mongst these stones.

ON THE APPEARANCE OF HALEY'S COMET, 1835.

Hail! wondrous visitant to this our sky!
Once more thou shinest on the human eye;
How far remote thy ample rounds have been
Since last thy blaze by mortal man was seen!
Who can behold thee on thy rapid flight,
Steering thy course towards the fount of light,
Without being wrapt in deep solemnity,
Or bending low before the Deity
Who form'd thy shape—and with a mighty force
First launch'd thee on thy long eccentric course,
To traverse worlds to human sight obscure,
And all the test of ages to endure?
Yet still how small a speck art thou in space!
And e'en th' included compass of thy race
Is but an atom in that mighty whole
Unfathom'd by the powers of the soul.
Still thou, the common dictates of thy God
Obey'st in truth, and moveth at His nod
Amongst those worlds of strong attractive force,
Ne'er straying from thine own allotted course.
Since last thou pass'd the confines of this earth
A new-born race have burst forth into birth;

And scarcely one remains below to tell
When thou of earth didst take thy last farewell!
E'en he who mark'd thy course and laws so true,
Ere thou return'd, hath bid this world adieu;
While each succeeding rout thou dost perform
Mankind are swept by Time's destroying storm
From off this earth—leaving no trace behind
But the succeeding offspring of their kind:
But thou, from age to age thy course doth run
In thine elliptic journey round the sun;
And at the end of every seventy years
Thy lustre to the human eye appears.
Here let me gaze on thee with sweet delight,
For thou proclaim'st the power and the might
Of the Omnipotent—whose hand divine
First gave thee speed, and caused thy train to shine!

REFLECTIONS.

O! DREAD eternal Source of all
 Existing matter here below,
My knowledge of thee, O, how small!
 How far beyond my power to know
Are thy deep attributes on high,
 Combined with all that's here on earth!
When angels wonder, how can I,
 Born of a dark terrestrial birth,
Pretend to pierce that shining blaze
 Which baffles e'en seraphic sight,
Or view the bright refulgent rays
 That wrap thee in thy robes of light?
Then as a creature of thine hand,
 Involved in solemn mystery,
I sprung to life, at thy command,
 To live throughout eternity,
From Thee!—for thou the fountain art
 From whence this mind must have its source,
As nothing less could thus impart
 Such an extensive mighty force
Of thought, or solemn reasoning,
 While yet within an earthly clod,
It fain would know of everything
 Throughout all nature up to God!

REFLECTIONS.

GREAT God of all the host above,
Who reign'st supreme yet undefined,
The source of bliss and endless love,
And fountain of the human mind,—
Though far remote from every thought
Thou dwell'st in deep obscurity,
Yet all this spacious earth is fraught
With thy all-dread ubiquity:—
Teach me thy mercies to rehearse
From day to day, while here below,
And all my sinful thoughts disperse
That I thy saving grace may know.
O teach me, Lord, to worship thee
In spirit, and in truth alone,
Let all my thoughts from earth be free
When I approach thy gracious throne
To sue for pardon, and for peace,
Through the atoning Lamb of God,
That once was slain for Adam's race
To screen us from thy chastening rod!

REFLECTIONS AT SEA.

Ere this round earth's foundation stone was laid,
Or suns, or stars, or any creature made,
The mighty Father on his heavenly throne
Lived beyond time eternally alone,
Containing all within this earth and sky,
A self-existing boundless Deity!
But how or when creation first began
Is far too deep for mortal mind to scan.
To demonstrate, or even have a thought,
How those bright orbs from chaos first were brought
To range at large the wide expanse of space,
For what design—who but a God can trace?
Though reason asks the simple question, why
So many bodies should be placed on high
For man's frail use, on this his earthly sphere,
Some of whose rays in distance disappear?
But why should Man thus strive to know the cause
Of the Creator's most intricate laws,
Whilst he himself's the greatest mystery
Throughout the whole that he can yet descry?
How can an earth-born creature here below
Presume the mighty works of God to know,
While darkness shrouds the being of that mind
By which less mighty things are oft defined?

Though high it soars on intellectual wings,
Beyond this earth and all terrestrial things,
To survey nature with a mental eye
Amidst the starry regions of the sky—
From God's high attributes to God it speeds,
Then on itself at last the mind recedes,
Quite satisfied that for Man to explain
The awful myst'ry must at best prove vain.
Man's soul, with essence springing from a God,
When dies the body, leaves the senseless clod:
But whither shall this mystic being stray
When disembodied from its frame of clay?
Shall it ascend beyond the dark abyss
That parts creation from the realms of bliss,
Beholding all in a seraphic light
That now is hidden from its earthly sight?
Winging its flight along the trackless road
To seek the haven of its blest abode,
Beholding all creation at a glance,
A nameless thing filling the vast expanse?
Or shall it hover round its sleeping clay
Until the morning of that solemn day,
Waiting the summons from the silent tomb
To reunite, and share the final doom?
In vain we seek the mystery to learn,
For disappointment keen is all we earn,
Nor more, nor what our doom may be, we know
Till death shall free us from this world of woe!

REFLECTIONS ON MAN.

I've ofttimes thought why mortal man,
Whose fleeting life is but a span
Of vast eternity,
Should strive his brother to oppress
While trav'lling through this wilderness
Of dread obscurity.

In ages past, when we were not,
Our foresires lived, tho' now forgot
Within their lowly bed,
And so shall we, as well as they,
Each in our turn soon pass away
To moulder with the dead.

Then, brothers, while we travel here,
Let us the common blessings share,
And banish sordid gain;
It is the fount of earthly joy
Man's fleeting moments to employ
To ease his brother's pain.

All that weak man requires below
His Maker kindly doth bestow,
And gives it free to all,—
The fish, the fowl, the beast, the field,
Abundant food for him doth yield
At labour's simple call.

Then why should not mankind unite
To help each other with delight
Along life's dreary road,
And drive Oppression's iron hand
From ev'ry realm throughout the land
Of our terrene abode?

How better far mankind might be
If they the bad effects would see
Of ill-begotten wealth,
For, to accumulate a store
Unjustly of the glittering ore
Is worse than craft, or stealth.

O Man! reflect on what thou art,
And let not pride deceive thy heart,
For here below poor mortals are
Dependant on their Maker's care.

To travel onwards is our doom
With rapid strides towards the tomb,
The space between our life and death
Is measured only by a breath!

Such is the fate of all mankind,
For no exception canst thou find,
The present time is all that can
Be truly call'd the life of man!

Then what we now enjoy is all,
As what is past we can't recall,
And what's to come is future's own,
A thing uncertain, and unknown.

Yet future hope, Man's certain friend
When based on Christ as aim and end,
Will cheer him thro' life's thorny road,
Whilst struggling on to meet his God.

LINES

WRITTEN ON BOARD H.M. SHIP DONEGAL, 1st JAN. 1839.

ANOTHER year hath pass'd the verge of Time,
Fraught with the deeds of man in every clime,
To be reserved until that solemn day
When he his mighty circling rounds shall stay,
That all that is obscured from mortal sight
May be beheld in a seraphic light,
After mortality gives up his prey,
And darkness yields to an eternal day!
Vain mortal man! what shall be then thy doom
When thou art summon'd from the silent tomb,
To give account of what thou didst on earth
Back from that morn unto creation's birth?
In that dread day, where can the sinner fly
To hide himself from the Omniscient eye?
For earth, and sea, and air shall yield their store
At that dread sound, proclaiming Time no more!
Eternity shall wrap the universe,
And day and night their tale no more rehearse!
Then, brother mortal, why shouldst thou oppress
Thy fellow-trav'ller through this wilderness?
Why should a sordid wish break nature's tie
And dry the tear of pity in thine eye?
How canst thou prize the gain of earthly dross,
Which may but end in mis'ry and remorse,

And shut thine ear unto thy brother's cry
When pinch'd for food, e'en nature to supply?
Think'st thou, that He who form'd the earth and sky
Does not thy inhumanity descry?
And though his sparing hand prevents the stroke,
Yet His kind mercy thou mayst soon provoke
To pour His vengeance on thy guilty head,
And strew with prickly thorns thy dying bed!
In that dread day, what will thy gold avail
When Death, in all his terrors, shall prevail
In dragging thee from off this stage of life,
While yet thy soul with carnal thoughts is rife?
No longer let the love of earthly gain
Harden thy heart to give thy brother pain;
But rather ease his burden on the road
Through life's rough journey to that dark abode
Where all must dwell, though different climes they roam,
Before they meet at that eternal home.
Then why should man, in this short span of life,
So waste his time in misery and strife
In gaining lucre, which he can't retain,
As if he here were ever to remain?
Ah! stifle not the spark of heavenly love,
It is a voice that warns thee from above
To tread the paths of sweet humanity,
And shun the road to sin and vanity!

LINES

WRITTEN ON BOARD H. M. SHIP TRIBUNE, WHILE CROSSING THE BAY OF BISCAY, 1838.

THE Sun below the western tide
Sinks slowly in refulgent blaze,
While each fair cloud that round doth glide
Blushes beneath his parting gaze,—

What earthly artist's mimic quill
Could trace the hand of Nature there?
For Science fails with all her skill
In picturing a scene so fair.

Here let me view them as they fade,
While mingling with the evening grey,
As die their brilliant crimson-shade
In the faint violet away.

As gently steals the soft twilight
Along old Ocean's tranquil breast,
Closely behind comes sable Night
To lull the world below to rest.

As on he sweeps with rapid strides,
 Spreading his mantle o'er the main,
The new-horn'd Moon her aspect hides,
 And glimmer forth the starry train.

On mental wings my soul would fly,
 If free from earthly ties below,
To trace the hand of Deity,
 His hidden mysteries to know,

Where those bright orbs of light doth shine
 From native lustre in their spheres,
Proclaiming forth the hand divine
 That makes them stand the flux of years:

But ah! my panting soul must wait,
 As all that's mortal must be seal'd
Ere it can enter on that state
 Of immortality reveal'd.

Man's mortal body is confined
 To limits not beyond this globe,
Yet, far above extends the mind,
 Leaving behind its earthly robe;

From world to world it glides along,—
 Surveying nature's mighty field—
Viewing the planetary throng
 As round their annual course they're wheel'd.

Up nature's concave vault it soars,
And roves the deep immensity
Of mighty space—whose boundless shores
Are lost in dread eternity!

Below, is nature's fertile womb,
So vastly fraught with vital seed;
Above,—worlds countless have their room,
And end, by God's great will decreed!

To limit the Almighty hand,
How vain, how futile, and how weak!
His mysteries to understand,
E'en man, and angels, vainly seek!

To paint a place where God is not
Imagination strives in vain,
Above, below, there's not a spot
But owns his presence and his reign!

He fills the vast obscure expanse,
And awful nature's utmost bounds
Are mark'd by Him—and to enhance
His pow'r, he the whole surrounds!

God did exist ere Time began
To feast upon his daily prey,
And strike to earth poor feeble man
Who falls beneath his powerful sway!

Great Author of the universe!
I bow before thine awful throne—
My humble lay cannot rehearse
Thy mighty deeds—in words alone:

In silence, then, let me adore,
And contemplate thy godlike fame,—
Thy greatness and thy love are more
Than any thought or speech can name!

LINES

ON THE ENGLISH SAILORS' BURYING GROUND AT MARMORICE, ASIA MINOR, 1841.

Beneath the myrtle's cooling shade,
On Keramania's shore,
In Marmorice's lonely vale,
Our shipmates, now no more,
Securely sleep below the turf,
Each in his earthly cell,
In ever gloomy solitude
Through future time to dwell.

Farewell, each brave and honest heart!
On deck you've nobly done your part,
Now rest in peace below;
And when around our mess we meet,
We'll o'er your vacant wonted seat
A messmate's tear bestow.

EPITAPH

ON THE AUTHOR'S MOTHER.

Beneath this green-clad hallow'd sod
A temple* of the living God
Here moulders into dust,
Who died in certain hope to rise
To meet her Saviour in the skies,
A saint thro' faith made just.

Ye guardian angels of the dead,
Protect my Mother's mortal bed,
And guard her sacred shrine,
Until the morning of that day
When Time his chariot wheels shall stay
At the decree Divine.

* 1 Cor. iii. 16.

EPITAPH

ON THE LATE MISS ANN WESTBROOK, OF WOOLWICH,

One of the Author's Subscribers.

Ye humble followers of the Lamb,
With pious hearts draw near,
And o'er a sister's ashes drop
A sympathetic tear,—
Not that ye should her fate bewail,
For God, in love divine,
Hath call'd th' immortal spirit home
Before His throne to shine
In robes of spotless purity,
Wash'd in th' atoning flood,
That issues from Emanuel's side,
Of water and of blood:
But if a tear ye should bestow,
Let it in love be given,
And if a sigh, be it to join
Her ransom'd soul in heaven.

THE AUTHOR'S
FAREWELL TO HIS SHIPMATES.

How fair and bright the happy scene
 Of former joy appears
Upon the time-worn memory,
 Amid the wreck of years,
When, in the stormy straits of life,
 At intervals we cast
A ling'ring retrospective glance
 On the long-cherish'd past!

Such are the feelings of this breast
 While on the past I dwell
With pleasing memory, and sigh,
 My shipmates, fare-ye-well!
This final word will end all strife,
 And seal pure friendship's tie,
Then, shipmates all, of every grade,
 I wish you well,—good bye!

ON NATURE.

Ere all that was, and is below,
And all that may henceforth appear,
From heaven's high Fount began to flow,
Or Time his course began to steer,
When Nature in her embrio lay,
And darkness o'er her realm did sway,—

Th' Omnipotent, upon his throne,
Enrobed in bright celestial light,
Without beginning, reign'd alone
In endless majesty and might,
Omniscient, boundless, uncreate,
Eternally in heavenly state.

When, in his council, God decreed
To call forth nature into birth,
No sooner did the word proceed
Than sprung from chaos mother Earth,
With all the spangled universe,
His awful grandeur to rehearse.

Next, Time came forth with steady wing,
Ready to take his circling flight
When the grand Master touch'd the spring,
In demonstration of his might,
To give projection to each sphere
Within their orbs with swift career.

Darkness no longer could maintain
Its ancient reign of gloomy night,
Nor could the fount of day refrain,
When said the Word, "Let there be light,"
From pouring forth life, light, and heat,
The glorious structure to complete.

Earth, sun, and moon, and stars were made
At great Jehovah's high command,
And Nature's vast foundation laid,
Firm fix'd by his Almighty hand;
And through his empire—boundless space—
Each planet's orbit he did trace.

Enwrapp'd within her watery shroud
Our mother Earth at first did roll
Amongst the new-created crowd,
Deep deluged o'er from pole to pole,
Fraught with her new prolific seed,
Engendering the vital breed.

While thus the great aquatic ball
Around its axis spun with speed,

(Allowing not a drop to fall
Or from its surface to recede),
It moved along its aeriel course
Compactly bound by central force,

Until were summon'd to subside,
Unto their hollow beds below,
The mighty flood of watery tide,
To have their bounds to ebb and flow,
When as they to their caverns fled,
Each rugged mountain rear'd its head.

Thus were divided sea and land,
At the Creator's mighty word,
Within their boundaries to stand,
Subservient to their sov'reign Lord
As long as Time his course should run,
And things exist beneath the sun.

When mother Earth, to stand the test
Of countless ages, thus began
To trundle eastward from the west,
To measure days and nights for man,
And round the genial sun to steer
Her annual course to mark the year,

Within her train, in due respect,
Appear'd the humble queen of night,
With varied aspect to reflect
The incidental rays of light,

And still to rule, as on she glides,
The flux and reflux of the tides:

Earth's polar axis too was placed
Obliquely to th' ecliptic plain,
And round her face each climate traced,
That all that sea and land contain
Might share the year's vicissitude
Of seasons in each latitude:

The great Colures'* expansive stride
Extends across the hemisphere,
In equal quarters to divide
The passing seasons of the year,—
Two vast imaginary rounds,
Whose circ'lar limbs evade all bounds,

Or circles form'd within the mind
Of men whose thoughts extend on high,
Leaving earth's minor scenes behind
To hold a converse with the sky,
Where countless worlds for ever there
Th' existence of a God declare.

The Zodiac's emblazon'd zone
Proclaims the silent strides of Time,

* Two great circles passing through the poles of the world. One of them passes through the equinoxial points *Aries* and *Libra*, the other through the solstitial points, *Cancer* and *Capricorn*. Hence they are called the equinoxial and solstitial colures; they divide the ecliptic into four equal parts, and mark the four seasons of the year.

As Sol, upon his shining throne,
Appears th' ecliptic road to climb,
Unchangeable in time and state,
Each passing month to indicate

By outlines of some earthly thing,
Drawn by the sages of the east,
(Ere Truth divine had ope'd her spring,)
When men mistook for God the beast,*
And placed its image in the sky,
In fancied immortality.

The Ram blows forth the boisterous blast
Of vernal equinoctial gales;
The Bull, when bleak March winds are past,
Is seen in April's past'ral vales;
The Twins prolific emblem prove,
In May, their influence in the grove;

The emblematic Crab† is seen
When June's in rosy wreaths array'd,
And fields are clad in emerald green
When Sol appears to retrograde;

* The Spring signs of the Zodiac were distinguished by the Chaldeans for the production of those animals held sacred by them, viz., the sheep, the black cattle, and the goats; the latter, being the most prolific, were represented by the figure of *Gemini*, or Twins.

† When the sun enters *Cancer* he discontinues his progress towards the north pole, and begins to return towards the south pole. This retrograde motion is represented by a *Crab*, which is said to go backwards.

The Lion's* strength July proclaims,
When sultry heat the earth inflames;

The Virgin,† in her harvest weeds,
With future golden prospects rife,
In August to the fields proceeds,
To gather in the staff of life;
September in the Balance‡ weighs,
In equipoise, the nights and days;

The Scorpion's|| tail October stings,
As it recedes from summer's heat,
And to the ground the foliage brings
In many a heap at its retreat;
The Archer's§ murderous shaft denotes
November's overflowing moats;

Uncheering, gloomy, and remote,
The source of day December hails

* The heat that usually follows in the next month is represented by the *Lion*, an animal remarkable for his fierceness, and which at this season was frequently impelled, through thirst, to leave the sandy desert and make his appearance on the banks of the Nile.

† The sun enters the sixth sign about the time of harvest, which is represented by a *Virgin*, or female reaper, decked with ears of corn.

‡ When the sun enters *Libra*, the days and nights are equal all over the world, and seem to observe an equilibrium like a balance.

|| Autumn, which produces fruits in great abundance, and brings with it a variety of diseases, is represented by that venomous animal, the *Scorpion*, which wounds with a sting in its tail as it recedes.

§ The fall of the leaf was the season for hunting, and the stars which marked the sun's path at this time were represented by a huntsman, or *Archer*, with his weapons of destruction.

From the cold regions of the Goat,*
And storm the northern sky assails;
The Water-bearer,† with his urn,
Hails January's bleak return;

The Fishes‡ now, strung back to back,
Again brings round the year to March,
And finishes the solar track
Around the great ecliptic arch,
Though in reality the Sun
Moves not, 'tis Earth and Moon that run

Their unresisted aeriel race
Around their gravitating source,
And in mid-air minutely trace
Their angular ecliptic course,
Still undiminish'd in their speed
They onward in their path proceed.

The Chaldean sages long of yore
Astronomical questions solved,

* The *Goat*, which delights in climbing the rugged rock and mountainous precipice, is the emblem of the Winter Solstice, when the sun begins to ascend from the southern tropic, and gradually to increase in altitude for the ensuing half year.

† *Aquarius*, or the Water Bearer, is represented by the figure of a man pouring out water from an urn, an emblem of the dreary and uncomfortable season of the year.

‡ The last of the zodiacal constellations is *Pisces*, or two fishes tied back to back, representing the fishing season. The severity of the winter is now over, and little sustenance is derived from the flocks, but the seas and rivers are open and abound with fish.

Taught by old traditional lore,
In fabulous mystery involved,
That sun and stars, since Nature's birth,
Revolved around quiescent earth,

And the result being still the same,
In calculating either's case,
Brought great Copernicus to shame,
Who died beneath the sad disgrace,
That he his powers did exert
The laws of nature to subvert:

But when great Newton's piercing eye
The distance, bulk, and number saw
Of the bright tenants of the sky,
He stamp'd the universal law
Of gravitating influence,
As the material consequence

Of matter, motion,—nay, the whole
Of wondrous nature down to man
Is subject to its stern control,
As far as boundless space can span,—
It doth the universe constrain
In one harmonious, endless chain.

Behold the glorious orb of light
Resting amid the blue immense,
With all the planetary weight
Supported by its influence,

In equilibrium so fine
That it depends upon a line,

Or point, or even less than this,
The true adjustment to maintain
Within the vast obscure abyss,
Whose space withholds within its reign
System on system without bound,
Moving majestically around

The common centre of their spheres,
Silently in their obscure state,
Whose endless distance countless years
Would be too short to calculate,—
Whose height, whose depth, whose lat'ral bounds
The searching mind of Man confounds!

Though far his natural eye can glance,
And farther his gigantic mind
Can soar amid the vast expanse,
While yet to parent earth confined,
Their boundaries like awful space
Evade his mental power to trace.—

Mysterious delegate, divine,
Of godlike essence from above,
'Mongst nature's whole 'tis only thine
To know and feel Jehovah's love!—
Suns only shine, and worlds move round
To perish at the trumpet's sound!

But thou, when thy probation's o'er,
Shalt fly to endless realms of light,
Where shall mortality no more
Obstruct thy free expansive flight
Through one eternal heavenly sphere,
Where sin and death shall ne'er appear!

FINIS.

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